

April 12, 1998

son wins  
der suit

ANGELES (AP) — A judge has ruled that a man claiming he had a tape of Michael Jackson having sex with a woman must pay the pop star \$2.7 million in damages. Jackson sued Victor Amarez in 1995 after Amarez said on television he possessed such a tape. Guiterrez also sued a book entitled "Michael Jackson Was a Lesbian." Guiterrez refused to present evidence that the tapes were true, claiming a law allowed him to keep them confidential.

dra Bullock gets  
ly for summer

BURK (AP) — Bullock has been named as the year's most inspired by a trip to the desert. He said that "just once in a while, even if it's for a moment, I'm going to stand up and say, 'I'm inspired by the desert.'" Bullock has been better and exercising. Eight weeks after he started a regime, he said, "It's the best principle of his training," said he had lost 100 pounds. He said he had lost 100 pounds. He said he had lost 100 pounds.

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**Israel attacks guerrilla bases in Lebanon**

NABATTYEH (AP) — Israeli warplanes raided suspected guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon Sunday. Two Israeli jets fired six air-to-surface missiles on hills near the deserted village of Sojod in Iqlim Al Tuffah, a Hizbollah stronghold that faces an Israeli-occupied border enclave in southern Lebanon, said Lebanese security officials, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. Puffs of black smoke billowed from the stricken area, but there was no immediate word on casualties from the 9:15 a.m. air strike, the second on Iqlim Al Tuffah in 10 days. Iqlim Al Tuffah, or Apple Province, is a frequent target of Israeli warplanes. The area is used by the Hizbollah guerrilla group as a base to launch attacks on Israeli troops and their allied Lebanese militiamen in the occupied zone.



# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي

**Iran-Iraq POW committee to meet Saturday**

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq said its joint committee with Iran on war prisoners will meet here next Saturday to reach an agreement on freeing the remaining POWs from their 1980-88 war. The committee will try to determine the number of remaining POWs based on information from their families and the International Committee of the Red Cross, said Riyadh Al Qaisi, director general of the foreign ministry. The prisoners will be released in groups, he told the official INA news agency Saturday night. The committee will also seek to learn the fate of soldiers who are missing, he added. In an exchange operation last week, Iran released 5,584 Iraqis while Iraq freed three Iranian POWs and 316 other detained Iraqis. Most of the prisoners had been held for more than 15 years.

## Majali reiterates call for Israel to honour signed agreements

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday called on Israel to honour its commitments, respect the agreements concluded with the Arab side and resume talks aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace.

Addressing a meeting attended by Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour and executives at the Information Ministry, Dr. Majali said that Jordan is keen on providing unlimited support for the Palestinian brothers.

He underlined the importance of the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks and for Israel to remove all obstacles which it has been placing in the path of peace noting that the Palestinians have proved their good intentions towards peace.

Negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel have failed to advance since March 1997 when Israel began building a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

Last week U.S. Mideast envoy Dennis Ross ended a regional tour without winning Israeli support for a proposal to withdraw Israeli troops from 13.1 per cent of the occupied West



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali

Bank. Israel insisted it would only withdraw from nine per cent of the territory.

Jordan is also keen on the resumption of peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks because the peace process can only be fulfilled when it is comprehensive, durable and just, the prime minister added.

Dr. Majali urged Israel to stop manoeuvring at the expense of the rights of the other nations in the region and seize the opportunity for peace so that the region



Israeli policemen arrest an Israeli supporter of the Peace Now movement, on Sunday near Gush Etzion in the West Bank, during protests against government sponsorship of a rally by Jewish settlers in Hebron (AFP photo)

## Israel's militants hold rally in support of Hebron settlers

6 injured in clash between peace activists, troops

HEBRON (AFP) — More than 10,000 Israeli militants flocked to the Jewish enclave in Hebron Sunday to attend a controversial rally marking Israel's 50th anniversary.

The Israeli army deployed heavy reinforcements around Hebron's Jewish enclave to protect the mass demonstration, which coincided with new threats by Islamists to attack Israeli interests.

Several hundred Israeli peace activists tried to disrupt the pro-settlement rally but were barred by police from entering the city, witnesses said.

More than 30 of the leftist protesters were arrested when they lay down on the main road leading from Jerusalem to Hebron in a bid to prevent busloads of right-wing Jewish militants and their families from reaching the city.

The rally, which critics said was sponsored with government funding set aside to mark Israel's 50th jubilee, was held next to the Cave of the Patriarchs, a site holy to both Muslims and Jews and a flashpoint for tensions in the

divided city.

Organisers set up stands nearby to raise funds for the 400-strong community of zealous Jewish settlers who live surrounded by Israeli troops in the centre of Hebron, a city of 120,000 Palestinians.

The celebration was attended by several government figures, including Israeli Justice Minister Tsahi Hanegbi of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party.

Under the Oslo peace accords, Israel withdrew in January 1996 from 80 per cent of Hebron, the last main West Bank town to come under the control of the Palestinian National Authority.

But Israeli troops remain in control of the Jewish enclave which is the focal point of frequent clashes between the

two sides.

Organisers pressed ahead with the rally despite threats from the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) to attack Israeli targets to avenge the killing two weeks ago of its main bombmaker, Mohieddin Sharif.

Palestinian police cleared the area of the police lines and then blocked the main road running south from Jerusalem to Hebron, sparking scuffles with the security forces.

Police eventually offered to let the buses travel as far as the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba just north of Hebron to hold their demonstration.

Peace Now called the demonstration to protest at government funding of the Hebron rally, one of a long series of official events marking the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

The main government event for the jubilee is due to be held in Jerusalem on April 30.

Peace Now published advertisements in Israeli newspapers Sunday denouncing the government support for the settler rally as "a shame for Israel" and calling on supporters to join a counter-demonstration in Hebron.

According to Israeli press reports, the government gave the Hebron settlers \$100,000 to organise the rally.

## Christians celebrate Easter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Incense, candle smoke and the prayers of pilgrims in many languages filled the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, traditional site of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, as Christians around the world celebrated Easter on Sunday.

In Rome, Pope John Paul II celebrated mass before some 150,000 faithful in wind-whipped St. Peter's Square.

Looking weary, the Pope prayed that the peace associated with Easter be an inspiration to "the leaders of the nations and to every person of goodwill, especially in the Middle East and particularly in Jerusalem, where peace is put at risk by dangerous political decisions." "May it give fresh courage to those who have believed and still believe in dialogue as the way to settle national and international tensions," he said.

In Canterbury, England, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey warned in his Easter sermon Sunday that bitter memories of violence can thwart the search for peace.

His sermon referred to three of the world's trouble spots: Northern Ireland, where Friday's peace agreement raised hopes for an end to the 30-year conflict; Rwanda, where violence has resumed since the return in late 1996 of exiled Hutu refugees; and Kosovo, where the majority Albanian population opposes Serb rule.

Presiding in Canterbury Cathedral, the spiritual leader of the Church of England and the world's 70 million Anglicans said "memory may play a crucial role in determining the way we live our lives either positively or negatively." Throughout Jerusalem, thousands of extra police and soldiers were deployed because of the threat of terror attacks in the Holy City, where Jews are celebrating Passover this week. Muslim 'Eid Al Adha celebrations ended Friday.

Michel Sabbah, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, said all three holidays signify "redemption from sin and



An Iraqi child visits a cemetery in Baghdad, on Easter Sunday. Iraq has a Christian community of around 1.5 million in a population of around 20 million (AFP photo)

servitude... and the return to life and freedom. They invite us to raise the same prayer to God for freedom and abundant life for all inhabitants of this Holy Land. To all, Muslims, Jews and Christians, I wish feasts full of joy and abundant life." Sunday was also Palm Sunday for the Orthodox Christian churches, which celebrate Easter next week. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a procession of Coptic Christians carrying palm fronds walked slowly through the Easter crowds, singing in Arabic.

"It is rather like the tower of Babel," said Arnez Petrig, 62, a pilgrim from Weisbaden, Germany. "Of course, to be in Jerusalem for Easter, for a Christian, the main thing is not the surroundings, but the inner part, what it means." By noon Sunday, thousands of people had crowded into the ancient church, where Monsignor Sabbah presided over mass from a gold-embroidered white chair.

"Before the glorious tomb, together we proclaim our faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ," he intoned.

Light from hundreds of candles reflected off the glasses of pilgrims, multiplying the yellow flames. Young men in white robes swung silver pots of incense, filling the air with the sweet fragrance.

"It's like another world here," said Francesca Pennisi, 30, of New York City. "I never expected it to be like this. It's just surreal. The whole thing, I can't process it." "Being here from all around the world, it's awoken me to the richness of the Christian tradition," said Laurel Nelson, 24, of Longmont, Colorado.

After singing and prayers, Latin priests waded into the crowd to give communion. One held a silver platter under each pilgrim's mouth, while the other took a wafer, dipped it in wine, and placed it on the pilgrim's tongue.

Monsignor Sabbah, who is Palestinian, said the Holy Land was "tired from the absence of peace" and lamented the "siege and limitation of freedom" imposed upon the Palestinians.

"With you, we say enough violence, enough blood and enough discrimination

## Lebanon rejects American pressure to consider Israeli pullout offer from south

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon rejected on Saturday a U.S. request to "seriously" study an offer by Israel to end its 20-year military occupation of south Lebanon in exchange for security guarantees, saying Israel had to pull out unconditionally.

Resolution 425 adopted by the U.N. Security Council in 1978 requires an unconditional withdrawal and Lebanon will not negotiate the terms of its implementation, Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz insisted in a TV interview.

Mr. Bweiz confirmed he had received a message from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Friday asking him to "seriously" study the Israeli offer following her talks with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai.

"Albright judged that he was sincere in his desire to bring about withdrawal from southern Lebanon," he said.

"She believes this proposal deserves to be studied seriously and does not contradict the

peace process."

But he insisted in the interview from Paris with the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, that he did not share the U.S. secretary of state's assessment.

"The very fact of agreeing to sit down at the negotiating table with Israel means recognising that U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 is not mandatory and needs negotiating," he said.

"Agreeing to negotiate would annul the essential characteristics of this resolution which in text and spirit is obligatory [for Israel] and automatic in its implementation."

"Negotiating 425 would mean that Lebanon is giving up demanding its implementation by the Security Council and agreeing to its amendment or putting into practice in any old fashion."

"This would mean entering the same endless maze as the peace talks between Israel and Syria, and Israel and the Palestinians," he said.

The Lebanese foreign minister insisted that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was only "trying to put us in a position which would deprive the resolution of content."

Mr. Bweiz, who is to meet his French counterpart Hubert Vedrine on Tuesday, said he would brief the Lebanese cabinet on his return from Paris before sending a written reply to Ms. Albright.

He said her message would also be discussed at a summit meeting in Damascus Monday between Lebanese President Elias Hrawi and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

Lebanon and Syria have both called the withdrawal offer made by the Israeli cabinet last week a "manoeuvre" aimed at separating the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in the Middle East peace process.

Syria demands that any deal on Lebanon be tied to Israeli agreement to withdraw from the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967 and annexed in 1981.

Peace negotiations between Syria and Israel have been suspended since February 1996.

But even before the Israeli cabinet's decision, U.N. chief Kofi Annan said the parameters for applying U.N. resolutions could be negotiable.

"I have always maintained that Security Council resolutions were binding and must be respected and applied," he said during a visit to Israel late last month.

"But in the last analysis, it is the parties concerned which must speak, negotiate, and accept the compromises necessary for applying the resolutions. They are not self-imposing."

In a statement released on April 2, the United Nations said that "respect of [any Israeli] withdrawal would require some discussions with all the concerned parties to be totally effective. The secretary general asks all parties to participate in this process."



[illegible]



## Heat wave expected to continue for next four days

AMMAN (J.T.) — The heat wave that has hit Jordan over the past week is expected to continue for at least four more days, with temperatures in Amman soaring to 34 degrees Celsius during the day and dropping to 18 at night, the Meteorology Department announced Sunday.

Director Haidham Sha'er said the heat wave has been caused by a high pressure cell centred over eastern Turkey and a hot air mass over the Arabian Peninsula accompanied by dry hot easterly winds blowing westward towards the region of the Mediterranean Sea.

According to Mr. Sha'er, average April temperatures in Jordan reach a high of 22 degrees and a low of nine.

But he pointed out that such hot spells are not unknown in the Kingdom. In April 1928, the highest April temperature recorded in Amman was 39.2 degrees during a heat wave that lasted nine days, and in April 1950, the capital city was struck with a heat wave for 12 days, during which temperatures reached 33.9, he said.

According to the department director, Jordan witnessed a heat wave in April 1994 that raised temperatures in Amman to 36 degrees Celsius.

The moderate easterly winds accompanying the heat are not laden with sand, as are the khamisic winds blowing from Libya and Egypt, the department said.



PRINCE RA'D OPENS TRAINING COURSE: His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid on Sunday opens a training course for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and voluntary societies helping the disabled. The course, which is being held at Queen Zein Al Sharaf Development Complex, was jointly launched by the Jordanian-European Information, Training and Technical Assistance (JETT) Programme for NGOs in cooperation with the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (Petra photo)

## Proceeds from music festival distributed to humanitarian, health organisations

AMMAN (J.T.) — The proceeds from the Orbit Song Festival, which was held in Amman earlier this year, were distributed Sunday as directed by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath to humanitarian and health-oriented organisations, according to press release.

The National Blood Bank, the Hospice Organisation, the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) and the Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA) are the organisations that benefited from the funds raised.

In a celebration attended by the YMWA Executive Board, a cheque was presented to the National Blood Bank, which intends

to purchase equipment to improve blood transfusion services in the country. The blood bank, West Amman branch, and the Zarqa Regional Blood Bank will benefit on this occasion from the new equipment, the statement said.

Jordan is among the countries in the region that have successfully developed national transfusion services. The main goal of the national blood banks is to provide safe blood and blood products to patients in need.

Princess Sarvath is the patron of the National Blood Bank and supports it in achieving its goals and objectives, of which the main one is to help the National Blood Transfusion Services in the Kingdom reach and maintain international standards, according to the announcement.

There are thirty blood banks in the Kingdom, twenty of which are run by the Ministry of Health while the remaining ten are run by the Royal Medical Services, Jordan University Hospital, the JNRCS and the Islamic Hospital.

In 1997, 104,614 units of blood were collected in the country. Twenty-seven per cent of the blood donors were volunteers and 73 per cent were family replacement blood donors.

The statement said that only two per cent of the population in Jordan are blood donors.

## Court sentences two to prison terms for 1997 murder, robbery

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court has sentenced an adult and a minor to jail terms of 12 and 20 years, respectively, after they were found guilty of robbing and murdering an 80-year-old woman in Ramtha last year.

Ahmad Hamdan, 20, was originally sentenced to death for murdering Faweh Taha on May 13, 1997 after stealing JD65 from her house. But the sentence was reduced to 20 years in prison "because he is young and committed the crime in complicity with another person."

The court also sentenced Mohammad Freih, 17, to 12

years in jail for the same charges. He will be transferred to a juvenile centre until he turns 18 but will be sent back to a jail to serve the full period.

According to court documents, the two defendants decided to rob the victim, who lived on her own.

"On the night of the murder, the two entered her house and attacked her while she was sleeping. Hamdan pinned her to the bed, while Freih strangled her to death with his bare hands," the court said. The two escaped with JD65.

The verdict, handed down last week by Justices Marwan Dabbas, Sami Karaki and Ibrahim Ali, will be reviewed

by a higher court within 30 days.

### Man convicted of murder resented

Also last week, a different court tribunal, re-trying a 35-year-old father who was sentenced to 15 years in jail in February after he was found guilty of killing his son in Jabal Nadif in May 1997, decided to halve his sentence.

The court tribunal, presided over by Judge Mohammad Ajameh and including Judges Mufleh Mubaidin and Issa Hamdan, had sentenced Atef Ashour to 15 years for setting his 11-year-old son ablaze.

But in April, the Court of

Cassation returned the case to the Criminal Court asking it to commute the sentence because the mother and brother of the victim dropped charges against the boy.

According to court documents, Nidal and two of his brothers were studying in the front yard of their house. Their screaming awakened their father and angered him. "He went out and asked them to tear up their books, but Nidal refused. So his father took him to the bathroom, poured kerosene on him and set him on fire."

Minutes later, Mr. Ashour put out the fire and rushed his son to Al Bashir Hospital, where he died two days later from severe burns.

## International medical conference expected to draw over 200 specialists

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Society for Ear, Nose and Throat Medicine will hold its first international conference in Amman on April 20 under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor with the participation of more than 200 specialists from Jordan, Arab and foreign countries.

The head of the conference's preparatory committee, Hassan Badran, said the conference will be held at the Royal Cultural Centre under the theme: "Raising the Standard of the Profession and Maintaining Contacts with Specialists in Arab countries and the World."

Dr. Badran told a press conference Sunday that the three-day conference will cover topics related to ear, nose and throat surgery and treating snoring and allergies using laser, among other relevant subjects.

During the conference, two seminars will be held on ear, nose and throat surgery, while on the sidelines of the conference the society will organise an exhibition in which major firms from Arab and foreign countries will take part, he added.

Dr. Badran said 20 lectures will be delivered at the conference, and delegates will review 40 working papers to be submitted by specialists from France, the U.S., Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

In addition, the delegates will be taken on a tour of touristic and archaeological sites in the country.

## Health ministry to introduce national health insurance plan soon — Kurdi

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi on Sunday said the ministry is taking major steps to introduce a national health plan soon.

The scheme will guarantee good medical service for citizens at government-run hospitals, according to Dr. Kurdi, who was speaking during an inspection visit to the ministry's primary health care department.

The department is entrusted with providing primary health care in schools and is in charge of sanitation and centres dealing with chest diseases.

Dr. Kurdi said the Ministry of Health is at present making plans to improve public medical services and has allocated \$6 million to improve the skills and efficiency of health workers, including doctors and nurses, through advanced training programmes.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali urged the ministry to speed up work on finalising a national health insurance plan to cover all citizens.

The prime minister also said the ministry should take steps to offer citizens the best possible medical service.

Under the present system, only government employees, their dependants and poor people have the right to free treatment at government hospitals. Private sector employees must pay for treatment at both government and private hospitals.

Under the ministry's plan, all Jordanians will be entitled to treatment at government hospitals and health centres without discrimination.

During his inspection visit, Dr. Kurdi said the primary health care department provides an essential service to the country and the people. He said the government will soon announce the beginning of operations of the Jordanian Medical Institution, an organisation that will assume many of the responsibilities of the ministry, which will be left with the tasks of ensuring primary health care and supervising the general health situation.

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UKRAINIAN AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS: The new Ukrainian ambassador to Jordan, Yevgeny Michenko, Sunday presents his credentials to Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani (Petra photo)

## Shrine renovations awaiting funding — ministry

By Ahmad Khatib  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Sunday said lack of funds could hamper an ambitious multi-million dinar plan to rehabilitate over 20 ancient mosques and holy shrines housing the remains of many of the companions of Prophet Muhammad.

The sites, scattered across Jordan, have become a major attraction for religious and cultural tours. Iran's majority Shi'ite population, many of whom have started visiting the Kingdom after Jordan eased travel restrictions, are also interested in visiting these shrines.

"The ministry is still studying the scheme and wants to implement it," Abdullah Ensour, director of Islamic tourism and antiquities at the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, told the Jordan Times.

"But without proper financing, the ministry cannot afford to implement the plan."

The scheme, which also includes excavating Islamic sites and mosques to restore them, carries an estimated cost of JD4.2 million.

Mr. Ensour said that under the plan, libraries housing thousands of books on humanities and Islamic civilisation would be set up next to many of the existing and new mosques.

The plan also calls for appropriating land around many sites to help preserve them. Regulations to protect, develop, and improve these sites would be needed and booklets promoting the sites and documenting the various Islamic

battles on Jordanian soil would also be prepared, he added.

To raise funds, Mr. Ensour suggested an increase in the budget set aside for the Royal Commission for Restoring Shrines and the involvement of 'Al Al Bayt Foundation to enable them carry out the plan.

He also suggested the creation of a department for Islamic tourism and antiquities to function under the ministry's umbrella. The department would coordinate marketing efforts with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to promote the sites.

Mr. Menendez did not rule out the possibility of including demining as part of ECHO's work in Jordan.

ECHO networks with European NGOs, United Nations agencies and other international organisations to raise funds for its operations after submitting proposals.

In Amman, ECHO is about to start networking with European NGOs who are looking for Jordanian partners.

"Once a European NGO gets funding for a proposal made for the country it is working in, then this NGO has to work with local counterparts to improve the quality of life for the concerned party," said Mr. Menendez.

Programmes currently being implemented by ECHO partners are predominantly geared towards the health sector.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Kaabneh receives Pakistani military delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai Kaabneh, on Sunday received a Pakistani military delegation. Field Marshal Kaabneh and the delegation discussed the situation in the Middle East as well as scopes of military cooperation between Jordan and Pakistan.

Amman mayor attends tree-planting ceremony

AMMAN (Petra) —

Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi on Sunday attended a tree-planting ceremony in the Zahran area. The planting ceremony was organised by the Arab Women's Society in Wadi Abdoun.

Culture minister, Iranian ambassador discuss cooperation agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sata'an Hassan received Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Ali Subhani, with whom he reviewed means of activating a bilateral cooperation agreement signed in 1997.

## what's going on

### FILMS

\* "Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Wadiah at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.  
\* German film "Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter" (with subtitles in English) at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman on Tuesday, April 14, at 6:30 p.m.

### LECTURES

\* Lecture on "Crimes of Honour in Jordan" (in Arabic) by Rana Hussein at the Women Graduates of Arab Universities Club (off Garab St.) at 5:00 p.m.  
\* "Arab Thought and Modernisation Challenges" (in Arabic) by Dr. Hisham Ghassib at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

### BALLET

\* Ballet performance by the students of the Ahliyyah School for Girls at the Royal Cultural Centre on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 14 and 15, at 8:00 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Works by Maurice Haddad at Hammurabi Arts Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5336098), until April 22.  
\* Exhibition of works by Jordanian artists Ramin Rshaid, Abdullah Thaisat and Qasem Al Dwairi at the Royal Cultural Centre, until April 16.  
\* Paintings on handmade paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra St. (Tel. 5699141/2), until April 25.

## Amman bureau of European humanitarian office officially begins operations

By Hind-Lara Mango  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The European Commission has approved a new package of humanitarian aid worth around JD2.4 million for those in need in Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The aid package is managed by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) in Amman and will enable specialist organisations of the U.N. and non-governmental organisations

(NGOs) to carry out programmes over the next six to eight months.

ECHO's regional bureau formally opened its doors at the end of March in Amman to serve refugees and vulnerable groups in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

"It was decided in Brussels that due to Jordan's strategic location in the Middle East, an office in Jordan would give easy access to countries covered by ECHO," Emilio Menendez, ECHO Middle

East coordinator, told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

In Jordan, ECHO has for the first time earmarked approximately JD480,000 for Palestinian refugees living in camps here.

Diplomats have said humanitarian aid continues to be vital in the region, especially since the peace process has been faltering.

ECHO began operations in Palestine and Lebanon five years ago, supervising and monitoring relief programmes for refugees and vulnerable groups in these

debt-riddled areas. Its work was later extended to cover Jordan and Syria.

"The Amman office is currently assessing the needs and priorities of Palestinian refugees and also the vulnerable Jordanian groups. A proposal will be sent to Brussels with an evaluation of the situation," Mr. Menendez added without elaborating.

ECHO also works on demining areas and providing surgical care and rehabilitation to victims of these explosives in northern parts

of Iraq, home to many Kurds. The region remains threatened by internal strife and frequent incursions from the Turkish army.

ECHO has already secured approval from the European Commission for a humanitarian aid package that will enable European NGOs to use approximately JD1.5 million for relief operations related to anti-personnel mines in northern Iraq.

Jordan, according to army officials, suffers from the threat of 280,000 anti-personnel mines

planted mainly along the border with Israel during its 46-year state of war with the Jewish state. A fraction of them have been demined and Jordan has long sought foreign aid to remove the rest.

Mr. Menendez did not rule out the possibility of including demining as part of ECHO's work in Jordan.

ECHO networks with European NGOs, United Nations agencies and other international organisations to raise funds for its operations after submitting proposals.

In Amman, ECHO is about to start networking with European NGOs who are looking for Jordanian partners.

"Once a European NGO gets funding for a proposal made for the country it is working in, then this NGO has to work with local counterparts to improve the quality of life for the concerned party," said Mr. Menendez.

Programmes currently being implemented by ECHO partners are predominantly geared towards the health sector.



## Two Koreas inch towards accord in high-level talks

BEIJING (AFP) — North and South Korean officials struggled towards an accord here Sunday after agreeing to discuss their different demands simultaneously at landmark government-level talks.

"We have agreed to discuss the fertilizer issue in parallel with ways of improving inter-Korean ties and the issue of separated families," said South Korean chief delegate Jeong Se-Hyun on the second day of the meeting.

Mr. Jeong's North Korean counterpart Jon Kum-Chol said: "We had sincere talks. We have reached an agreement on a broad principle but there are differences on how to get there."

"We need more meetings to narrow down differences," he said.

The two sides held 90 minutes of closed-door, working-level talks later Sunday to iron out differences.

"It is the first time in three years and nine months that we are holding these kind of talks. Therefore, there are too many things to discuss. We are going to handle them one by one," Mr. Jon told

journalists after the working-level discussions.

The talks will resume Monday, another North Korean official said.

North Korea reportedly wants 200,000 tonnes of nitrate fertilisers from South Korea, which has said it has enough supplies and would even offer more aid if Pyongyang officially asked for it.

But the South said fertiliser aid for the North's disaster-hit farms would be offered only at a price, proposing improvements in overall inter-Korean ties and arranging contacts and reunions of separated families.

The South has called for reunions of families separated by the division of Korea in 1945 and the Korean war of 1950-53, as well as the exchange of presidential envoys to help pave the way for a historic inter-Korean summit.

Before the second day of talks started, North Korea's Jon told journalists: "The South must stop playing around and provide us with the fertilizer as a lump sum."

Another North Korean delegate, Ri Sung-Duk

said: "We have yet to discuss how much the South could give us but we need all the fertilizer supply this month for the spring planting season."

The talks took place as food shortages in the North worsened to disaster proportions.

Aid agency Medecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said Saturday that incidents of cannibalism were reported from the famine-stricken North as those struggling to survive were denied international food aid.

Much international aid was going to officials and the army, it said, quoting witnesses and other sources in a report on the North Korean situation.

Sunday, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) threatened to cut food aid to the starving North because it has refused access to 50 counties to enable monitoring of aid food distribution.

On arriving here from a visit to North Korea, WFP executive director Catherine Bertini said Sunday the WFP could decrease its appeal by about 87,000 tonnes.

The WFP currently has

an appeal for 658,000 tonnes of emergency aid to North Korea, where three years of natural disasters and a crumbling economy have brought the nation to its knees.

But 50 out of 210 counties, home to around 20 per cent of the population, remain out of bounds to international aid agencies, she said, leading to fears food may not be reaching targets.

Against that grim backdrop, Pyongyang last week proposed the government-level talks, reversing its earlier stance that it would "never sit face-to-face with South Korean government authorities."

There had been no government-level talks between the two rivals since an attempt to hold a historic summit between the two Koreas fell through following the death of North Korean president Kim Il-Sung in 1994.

Kim Il-Sung was succeeded by his eldest son, Kim Jong-Il, 55, while the government helm in the South was taken over by former opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung, 74.



Pope John Paul II enters St. Peter's Square surrounded by more than 25,000 flowers donated by Netherlands to celebrate the Easter mass and his Urbi et Orbi (to the city and the world) message read to more than 150,000 people gathered in St. Peter's Square (Reuters photo)

## Pope's Easter message speaks of hopes, fears

VATICAN CITY (R) — In his Easter message Sunday, Pope John Paul II urged humanity not to repeat the tragic errors of the 20th century and warned that the world was being sown by new "seeds of death" as it neared 2000.

The 77-year-old Pope's plea for humanity to avoid what he called "a sad tomorrow" in the new millennium came in his "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world) message read to more than 150,000 people in St. Peter's Square.

Wearing resplendent gold and white vestments on the most important day in the Christian liturgical calendar, the Pontiff also wished the world a happy Easter in 58 languages.

The Pope, who has suffered a series of health problems in recent years, looked in good form during a 90-minute mass in St. Peter's Square celebrated from an altar bedecked by more than 25,000 flowers donated by the Netherlands.

Later, celebrating the 20th Easter season of his pontificate, he read a message — a blend of light and shadow and hopes and

fears — to a big crowd that braved intermittent rain.

The Pope said he wanted to pay tribute to those who proclaimed Christ's message "in the concentration camps and the gulags, under the threat of bombs and guns, amid the terror unleashed by the blind hatred which has tragically engulfed individuals and whole nations."

Speaking to hundreds of millions of people around the world through live television and radio links with 65 countries, the Pope said it was necessary to proclaim the peace of Christ "to all humanity on its way to the third millennium."

But he said the world could not close its eyes to men and women caught up in "fratricidal strife and slaughter."

These tragedies had reopened "the wounds of ethnic rivalries and, in different parts of every continent, especially in Africa and Europe, are now sowing in the earth the seed of death and new conflicts for a sad tomorrow," he said.

"This proclamation of peace is for all those who

are undergoing a Calvary seemingly without end, thwarted in their aspiration for respect for their dignity and human rights, for justice, for employment, for fairer living conditions."

He prayed that his proclamation of peace would be heard by leaders of nations and all people of good will.

The Pope said he hoped the spirit of Easter could "give fresh courage to those who have believed and still believe in dialogue as the way to settle national and international tensions."

"May it fill everyone's heart with the boldness of hope, which springs from the truth being recognised and respected so that new and promising prospects of solidarity may open up in the world," he said.

After his address, the pope wished the world a happy Easter in languages including Albanian, Serbian, Ethiopian, Gaelic, Hebrew, Arabic, Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Cambodian and, of course, his native Polish and Latin, the official language of the church.

## Khmer Rouge draws last gasp as net closes

TRAPENG PRASAT, Cambodia (AFP) —

Cambodian defence chiefs say they are closing the net on Khmer Rouge leaders and that the hardliners were still in control of Angkor Veng.

There have been no arrests of any Khmer Rouge leaders in Thailand, one military source told AFP. "No Khmer Rouge leaders are staying in Thailand but they may be staying close to the border."

"It looks like propaganda by the Cambodian government to show people that they can control Angkor Veng."

Thai Army Commander Chhettha Thanajaro said Saturday that Khmer Rouge leaders would be arrested and sent back to Cambodia if they were found in Thailand. He ordered Thai troops to seal the border.

Regardless of Ta Mok's status, Teah Banh, who flew to Trapeng Prasat from Phnom Penh with the defence attaches from many foreign embassies, said the Khmer Rouge would be finished in the coming days.

"It is nearly over," he said, noting that defectors backed by government troops were closing in on the area between Angkor Veng and the Thai border.

Senior government field officers briefed the military attaches and Teah Banh and repeated allegations that Ta Mok loyalists were fleeing over the Thai border.

Thai soil near the border. Thai military sources maintained, however, that no Khmer Rouge figures had crossed into Thailand and that the hardliners were still in control of Angkor Veng.

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"The Thais let them in and will not allow us to follow," one officer told the attaches.

The military attaché from the Thai embassy was conspicuously absent from the briefing. Colleagues said he had told them that he had been called to Bangkok and could not make the trip.

After the briefing, at which both Vietnam and China — major players in the history of the Khmer Rouge — were represented, Teah Banh congratulated the defectors for splitting from Ta Mok.

"Usually in the dry season we are fighting each other," he told a crowd of about 300 former guerrillas, dressed in their Chinese-style fatigues, and their families. "This dry season we are working together to develop the area."

Im Heun, commander of Khmer Rouge Division 612, who led the defectors in their break, said their goal was to finish Ta Mok.

"As long as Ta Mok leads the other side, we will fight," he said. "We want him arrested."

Military officials also said the resistance army of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh — which has been loosely allied with the guerrillas — had also suffered crippling defections.

None of the government claims could be independently confirmed.

## Cracks weaker Kohl's majority, 6 months before polls

BONN (AFP) — Rifts have opened up in German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's ruling coalition, only six months before legislative elections in which opinion polls suggest he is heading for defeat.

Lately, the Christian-Social Union (CSU) — the Bavarian sister party of Mr. Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) — has clashed with the CDU on a controversial pollution tax proposal, and has vehemently criticised Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel of the small FDP liberal party.

And according to the generally well-informed magazine Der Spiegel, Mr. Kohl is also at loggerheads with CDU baron Wolfgang Schäuble — the man Mr. Kohl picked to succeed him as party chief — after Mr. Schäuble wrote into a draft CDU election manifesto, a proposal to tax certain polluting energy sources.

Der Spiegel said Mr. Kohl was "astounded" by Mr. Schäuble's proposal, which drew fire from the CSU, certain CDU leaders and from the FDP.

In an attempt to paper over the controversy, the CDU and the CSU came out with a joint communiqué Thursday announcing that they would present a joint election manifesto. The contentious energy tax issue appeared to have been put on the back burner.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister and CSU president Theo Waigel, reportedly phoned up Mr. Schäuble to remind him that in the lower house of parliament, the Bundestag, Mr. Schäuble was leader of the group formed both by CDU and CSU deputies.

According to the Berliner Morgenpost daily, the CSU made it clear to Mr. Schäuble that he should not consider his reelection to the post after the legislative elections, as a foregone conclusion.

But no sooner had the coalition managed to quell that storm, than another round of bickering began, this time over European policy.

Edmund Stoiber, the CSU Bavarian state government chief, hit out in an interview published Saturday in the magazine Focus, at the "death of commitment and competence" on the foreign ministry's part in defending German interests in the European Union.

Mr. Stoiber called for responsibility for European affairs to be shifted from the foreign ministry to another ministry "concerned with domestic policy".

The Bavarian Finance Minister Erwin Huber (also of the CSU), openly questioned Mr. Kinkel's ability to do his job. Mr. Kinkel reacted angrily, noting that he was not the only person who felt that Mr. Stoiber was "beginning to get on their nerves". He hinted strongly that with Bavarian state elections due two weeks before the Sept. 27, national polls, it was in Mr. Stoiber's interest to woo his conservative electorate with demonstrations of Euro-scepticism and attacks on the future European single currency.

Mr. Kinkel warned about the negative impact effect which the present infighting among the coalition partners could have on the voters. Some CDU leaders have even speculated about forming a broad-based coalition with the Social Democrats, if, as expected, they win in September.

Mr. Kohl immediately rejected such an idea as "absurd" while Mr. Waigel said a right-left coalition would be a "collective suicide". Nevertheless, opinion polls indicate that 35 per cent of Germans would support a CDU-SPD coalition against 31 per cent who prefer a coalition of the SPD and the Greens.

## 'Anti-Asia party will do well in early poll'

SYDNEY (AFP) — Pauline Hanson's anti-Asia One Nation party could pick up as many as two senate seats in the election expected this year, the centrist Australian Democrats party predicted Sunday.

Democrats leader, Meg Leases, also backed forecasts of other leading political analysts the big loser in the early election Prime Minister John Howard is expected to call, will be his own conservative Liberal-National coalition.

Mr. Howard last week set the clock ticking on a double dissolution poll between July 1 and early December after the senate refused to pass his native land rights legislation without amendment for a second time.

Under the deadlock provision of the constitution, refusal by the senate to pass a bill in unamended form a second time, gives the prime minister the right to call a double dissolution.

This means the bill goes before a joint sitting of parliament after an election and theoretically, at least, it should be passed by the governing party's lower house majority.

A double dissolution also means that twice as many senators would face election than would otherwise be the case, meaning a party need attract only half as many votes as usual to secure a senate seat.

This, according to Ms. Leases and others, means that although the One Nation is languishing at around three per cent support in national opinion polls, it has a much better chance in a double dissolution election for senators.

Her comments coincided with the first anniversary of the formation of the One Nation party, which declared Sunday that its policy on immigration would advocate hunting down and deporting all illegal immigrants.

"One Nation will have a good chance in Queensland," Ms. Leases said. "Indeed in a double dissolution, they'll take two seats, probably one off the Nationals and one off the Liberals," Ms. Leases said in a televised interview.

"They've got a good chance of a seat in both New South Wales and Western Australia," At present, Mr.

Howard's government is only one vote short of controlling the senate, but analysts say it will lose Senate seats in a double dissolution.

"They've already acknowledged a five-seat loss, maybe as many as eight," Ms. Leases said.

She also predicted that the Democrats, who along with a small group of independents controls the balance of power in the upper house, would also fare well in a double dissolution, winning at least one and possibly two more seats.

A One Nation spokesman said an estimated 47,000 illegal immigrants stayed in Australia each year, calculated on the number of arrivals and departures.

"That's nearly half a million in the last decade alone," he added. "They should be treated ruthlessly and deported. They are breaking Australia's immigration laws, there's no question about that."

One Nation Party would also call for valuables of illegal immigrants to be seized and sold off to cover the costs of deportations.

## China dissidents issue fresh call for Tiananmen review

BEIJING (AFP) — A dozen Chinese dissidents marked the death of the politician that sparked the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre Sunday with a call for political reform and a reassessment of the crackdown.

The 12 activists from eastern Zhejiang province issued the letter to current President and party Secretary Jiang Zemin calling for a review of the attack on unarmed pro-democracy demonstrators which left hundreds dead.

"Late party Secretary Hu Yaobang, who died nine years ago on April 15, dared to review the political errors of the past and engage in political reform," they said. "We urged you to learn from him and review the June 4, 1989, incident and give people freedoms," they added in the open letter faxed to AFP by the Hong Kong-based Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China.

Hu was forced from his post by party hardliners during the 1987 and bourgeois liberalisation campaign and his death in 1989 sparked the student demonstrations that culminated in the June 4 massacre on Tiananmen Square.

The 12 petitioners were veteran dissidents Mao Guoliang, Wang Donghai, Wang Youcai, Wu Xiaoping, Ye Wenxiang, Fu Quan, Zhao Wanmin and five other previously unknown activists.

In a separate development, the centre reported that boxing coach Pan Mingdong and engineer Xie Changfa, who both served two years in jail after the 1989 demonstrations were released from a second 15-day detention for trying to set up a rally in the city of Changsha.

The two were detained on March 27 for planning a rally to celebrate Zhu Rongji's election as premier and to discuss the issue of jobless workers.

Mr. Zhu, who was born in Changsha, central Hubei province, has pledged to press ahead with massive reforms of the state sector which will add to the growing numbers of laid off workers nationwide.

## Taiwan welcomes more news coverage by Chinese reporters

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan is poised to allow Chinese journalists to be conditionally based on the island for continuous news coverage, a report said Sunday.

The United Daily News top officials were preparing to approve the basing of reporters from China's major news media, including the official Xinhua news agency and the semi-official China News Service.

The paper said each Chinese journalist would be allowed to stay on three-monthly rotations.

Taiwan government spokesman Chen Chien-jen was quoted as saying Saturday he was pleased to see the development, which would enable Taiwan to better understand by the mainland populace.

"It has been the government's established policy

to promote news exchange between the two sides," Mr. Chen said, adding that he had been giving the issue priority since he took over as spokesman earlier this year.

Mr. Chen said "there is no consideration that has to be weighed here" as Taiwan supported press freedom.

Taiwan lifted on a case-by-case basis the decades-old ban on news coverage by Chinese reporters in September 1991.

Some 100 mainland journalists have since visited Taiwan.

Chang King-Yuh, chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), also welcomed the move, the United Daily News said.

The cabinet-level MAC is the island's highest government agency supervising civilian con-

tacts with China. Mr. Chang expected the restrictions to be further eased once strained Taipei-Beijing ties improve.

The Government Information Office proposed in late 1996 that Chinese journalists be permitted open offices in Taiwan, but the recommendation was shelved by the cabinet.

Bilateral ties ebbed after Beijing unilaterally broke off rapprochement talks in mid-1995 in retaliation for a U.S. visit by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui.

Beijing recently sent a letter to Taipei through its semi-official negotiation body welcoming a resumption of talks.

Taiwan and China, separated at the end of a civil war in 1949, opened unofficial contacts in the late 1980s.

World News  
Sonia Gandhi makes first step to rebuild India's Congress

DELHI (AFP) — Sonia Gandhi has launched a campaign to revitalize the once-dominant Congress party which has been mired in scandal and led by poor election results, reports here said.

She, the widow of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, was seen last week at a meeting of party leaders already appointed to prepare a new agenda for the party.

She will be headed by her son, Rahul Gandhi, the son of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who had been in the party for the past few days to prepare for revamping the party.

A 51-year-old party is seen after dominating under the Nehru-Gandhi family for most of its history, since the 1940s.

At the Congress annual meeting, Mr. Gandhi was seen with his daughter, Priyanka, who in turn is married to her son, Rahul, who is also a member of the party.

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Cracks weaker Kohl's majority 6 months before polls

ANN (AFP) — Robert Kohl's government is facing a series of setbacks, including a loss of its majority in the Bundestag, and is expected to fall within six months of the next election.

The 113-year-old party is in decline after dominating politics under the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty for most of the half-century since independence.

The party, which has been rocked by a series of high-profile corruption scandals, then turned to the 51-year-old widow in the hope that the aura surrounding the family name would arrest its political decline.

## Sonia Gandhi takes first step to rebuild India's Congress

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Sonia Gandhi has launched an initiative to revitalise India's once-dominant Congress party which has been mired in scandal and rocked by poor election results, reports here said Sunday.

Mrs. Gandhi, widow of assassinated former Premier Rajiv Gandhi, was elected president of Congress last week.

She has already appointed a six-member panel to prepare a "concrete agenda for revitalising the party," the Times of India said.

The panel will be headed by former speaker of the lower house, Purno Sangma and will submit a report by April 21, the Times said.

A Congress spokesman said Sonia Gandhi had met senior leaders of the party "over the past few days to collect inputs for revamping the party."

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, was succeeded as Congress leader by his daughter Indira Gandhi who in turn was replaced by her son Rajiv. He was assassinated in 1991 while campaigning for a return to office.

Voted out of power in 1996, the Congress won 141 of 545 seats in February-March elections, close to its worst-ever showing two years ago.

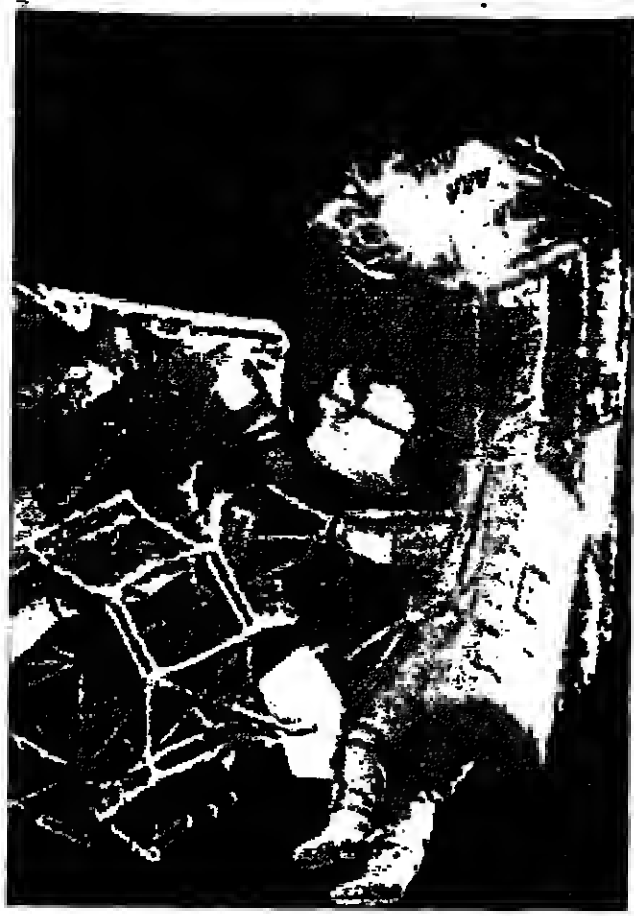
The party, which has been rocked by a series of high-profile corruption scandals, then turned to the 51-year-old widow in the hope that the aura surrounding the family name would arrest its political decline.

Sonia Gandhi, a mother of two, had shunned active politics since 1991 until last year, when she decided to campaign for Congress. She was chosen as the leader of the party last week.

## Bangkok asks embassy in Stockholm to investigate Internet sex ads

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand's foreign ministry has instructed the embassy in Sweden to investigate the source of Internet advertisements offering Thai girls as sex slaves for Swiss tourists, a report said Sunday.

Ministry spokesman Kobsak Chutikul said the embassy in Stockholm had been asked to find out



Russian cosmonaut Commander Tigran Musabayev, 47, and flight engineer Nikolai Budarin, 44, attempt to detach one of the propulsion units, attached to Mir by a 14-metre boom, which helps to keep the station correctly aligned with the sun for gathering solar power in orbit. The space walk lasted six hours (Reuters photo)

## Mir cosmonauts spend six hours on spacewalk

KOROLYOV, Russia (R) — Two Russian cosmonauts spent more than six hours outside their ageing Mir space station Saturday jettisoning a defunct external propulsion unit.

A spokesman for mission control in Korolyov outside Moscow said commander Tigran Musabayev, 47, and flight engineer Nikolai Budarin, 44, returned to Mir at 8:20 p.m. (1620 GMT) after completing the key task of their spacewalk.

"The hatch is closed, cosmonauts are back to the Mir," spokesman Valery Lyudskanov said. "They say they feel fine."

During the spacewalk, which started at 0955 GMT, Australian-born NASA scientist Andrew Thomas, 47, manned the controls inside the station.

At some stage during the spacewalk, mission control stopped receiving data from equipment on Musabayev's and Budarin's spacesuits which controlled their pulse and blood pressure, but officials appeared unperturbed.

"Such minor hitches have happened in the past," a mission control spokesman, Anatoly Kiryushkin, said. "They pose no threat to the cosmonauts and their mission."

"We told them to report their blood pressure and pulse every 15 to 20 minutes," he added.

Musabayev and Budarin detached and jettisoned one of the propulsion units, attached to Mir by a 14-

metre boom, which helps to keep the station correctly aligned to the sun and gathering solar power in orbit.

The unit, weighing 800 kg, had been running low on fuel but failed completely last Monday just after the cosmonauts had begun a spacewalk to detach it.

The station tilted out of line and they had to postpone the operation.

Since then, substitute propulsion unit has been started up. A new replacement unit is due to be fitted during two further space walks later this month.

Musabayev and Budarin were also due to fit an air-tight cap over an exhaust vent to allow one of Mir's oxygen generating systems, in use since 1987, to be repaired.

But after they reported to earth that they could see unidentified substance covering the cap, mission control told them to put off the task until experts had worked out what the substance was.

"Your mission is over, boys," the duty operator told the cosmonauts. "Pack up and return to the station."

The 12-year-old Mir, subject to a series of mishaps over the past year, is expected to keep flying at least for another year or two, providing a test bed for the international space station, the first module of which Russia should launch this year.

## Foreign embassies in Malaysia tighten security after weekend drama

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Foreign embassies in Malaysia went on alert Sunday, tightening security after 35 asylum-seeking Indonesian immigrants gate-crashed into four missions over the weekend.

A security official at the U.S. embassy, where eight immigrants from Indonesia's Aceh province remained, told AFP Sunday: "We have increased security measures to prevent another incident."

Other foreign missions were also reported to have beefed up surveillance in their compounds to prevent any further attempts to scale their walls.

The move has even led one European mission to temporarily freeze holidays for its security guards, the Malay-language Berita Harian newspaper said in a report Sunday, without

naming the mission.

Police have also stepped up patrols at diplomatic areas and kept guard at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) where 14 Indonesian immigrants remain, the daily added.

Friday, eight Acehnese immigrants staged a dramatic break-in to the U.S. mission by scaling a two-metre wall and are now being interrogated to ascertain their status.

But 20 other Acehnese who stormed into the French and Swiss embassies and seven who entered the nearby Sharif Ali Palace, a rest house for senior Brunei officers, were swiftly arrested by Malaysian police.

The break-ins occurred simultaneously and are believed to have been coordinated with the help of people sympathetic to the

group's plight, although police could not give details.

"The immigrants obviously have done a survey on the embassies that could be easily penetrated," said one European diplomat, noting no break-in was attempted at the British commission just across the road from the French embassy because it has barbed wire.

It was not known if Friday's group was part of some 100 immigrants who fled during rioting in four Malaysian detention camps on April 26 which left eight Indonesians and one local policeman dead.

Fourteen of those who escaped crashed a truck through the UNHCR compound gates on March 30 and have been holed up there since, awaiting news on their requests for asylum.

U.S. embassy officials said they were consulting with the UNHCR and had met Malaysian authorities to discuss the fate of the eight illegals but no deadline was set to resolve the issue.

UNHCR officials however, maintained it was up to the United States to decide the matter.

In Washington, the U.S. State Department has called on Malaysia to "treat this matter in a manner consistent with international law and the principles contained in the universal declaration of human rights."

A department spokesperson reportedly said the Indonesians may be granted asylum in Malaysia or another country if their claims were judged valid. Acehnese immigrants have been fighting their deportation back to

Indonesia arguing they face reprisals back home because of a low-level separatist campaign which has rumbled on in the province since the 1970s.

Friday's break-in was a repeat of an incident on Christmas Day in 1996 when Acehnese immigrants intruded into seven foreign missions — China, the United States, Britain, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Holland.

All the missions immediately surrendered the immigrants except for Holland and Switzerland who only did so after negotiations with the police.

Malaysia, which has deported thousands of illegal immigrants, has been criticised by human rights groups for not discriminating between economic and political migrants.

## 3 Balkan countries warn of impact of more Yugo sanctions

ATHENS (AFP) — Three Balkan countries ended a meeting Saturday warning of the damage that could be done to their region by new international sanctions on the former Yugoslavia over Kosovo.

In a communiqué, the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania "expressed their common view that any measures against Yugoslavia must take into account the economic and political stability of southeast Europe and must not harm the interests of the countries of the region."

After a meeting on the Greek island of Santorini, Greece's Theodore Pangalos, Bulgaria's Nadejda Mihailova and Romania's Andrei Plesu, backed their warning with a call for Belgrade to open talks rapidly with the ethnic-Albanian majority in Kosovo.

The international community has threatened new economic and political sanctions against Belgrade if it does not resolve the crisis in Kosovo, where a crackdown against Albanian-speakers has left more than 80 dead since February.

The ministers, meeting since Friday, agreed to continue their countries' efforts to boost regional economic cooperation and development.

The fourth such meeting since 1995, the gathering will be followed up at the end of May by a heads of government meeting.

The ministers agreed moreover to set up an "experts commission" to resolve a dispute between Bulgaria and Romania over the siting of a bridge over the Danube.

They also agreed on their determination to boost cooperation against organised crime.

## S. Korean police, students in 2nd day of standoff

SEOUL (AFP) — A standoff between some 1,300 students and 8,000 riot police continued into its second day Sunday, in a dispute over plans by radical students to elect officers to an outlawed student body, reports said.

Police have threatened to storm two campuses in the southern city of Taegu if the students go ahead with the elections.

Yonhap news agency said the number arrested over two days had risen to eight, while 185 others had been detained and released with a warning.

Intermittent rain dampened the mood in Taegu, some 300 kilometres south of Seoul, and no violence was reported.

Some 8,000 riot police faced off against around

300 students holed up inside Yeungnam University and another 1,000 in the city's Kyonghuk campus.

The radicals, members of the outlawed Hanchongnyon (Federation of University Councils), branded pro-North Korea by Seoul, have called on the police to allow them to "peacefully" hold an on-campus election of new office bearers.

The federation is branded "pro-North Korean" by Seoul because it defines the South Korean government as "the puppet government of the U.S. imperialists."

A huge police cordon has been thrown up around the campus, railway stations and bus terminals to prevent the planned three-day

rally and elections from Friday through Sunday.

In Seoul, 10 Hanchongnyon members have launched a hunger strike in the grounds of the city's Myongdong Cathedral. The 10 vowed not to eat until Wednesday, the deadline the students are asking to hold their elections.

The impasse coincided as crucial talks between the two warring Koreas continued in Beijing Sunday to discuss fertiliser aid and the reunion of separated families among other issues.

The talks are the first direct inter-Korean government dialogue since contacts were scuttled four years ago by the sudden death of former North Korean president Kim Il-

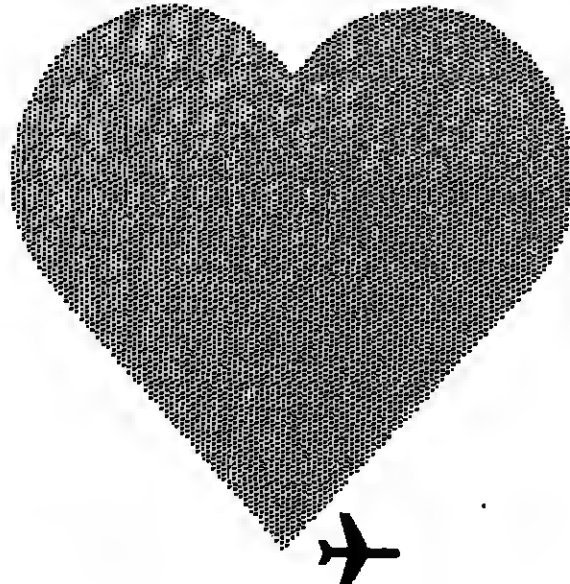
Sung.

Through its official broadcasts, Pyongyang has praised Hanchongnyon as true patriots, supporting efforts by its members to rebuild their tattered organisation.

In the past two years, scores of radical leaders have been hunted down and arrested. The government claimed that 191 out of 206 universities had kicked the group off their campuses.

The continuation of the crackdown by Kim Dae-jung, a former dissident who took office in February, was anticipated when jailed Hanchongnyon members were excluded from a recent amnesty for political prisoners.

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## Florida mom's friend smashes into prison, frees her son at gunpoint

MIAMI (AFP) — The mother of a 32-year-old man had a friend smash a large truck into a high-security Florida prison to rescue her son at gunpoint in a scene straight out of Hollywood.

The incident, which culminated in a shoot-out between the truck driver and prison guards, left only two guards slightly injured.

"This kind of thing usually happens in the movies," said Miami police spokesman

Rudy Espinosa.

Jay Siglar was almost halfway through his 20-year prison sentence for armed robbery when a big-rig crashed through four fences surrounding the Everglades Correctional Institution, some 32 kilometres west of Miami early Saturday afternoon.

Once inside the prison area the driver jumped out of the truck cab and blasted a gun at prison guards. The guards responded by firing their shot-

guns.

"The guy was crazy — he just bulldozed right through everything," said Julio Leon, a worker nearby who witnessed the event.

In the commotion Mr. Siglar bolted and hid in a waiting car that had followed the truck. The truck driver then ran back and together they fled in the getaway car.

Police quickly arrested Mr. Siglar's mother — Sandra Siglar, 58 — and two younger

accomplices at a shopping centre near the prison. "We believe Sandra was the mastermind behind this," Mr. Espinosa said.

Police are looking for Mr. Siglar, the truck driver, and a still undetermined number of inmates that also managed to escape.

When the Everglades Correctional prison was built in 1995 it was considered a model prison filled with state-of-the-art security technology.



**PHILADELPHIA** — Cleaned teeth are not just a pretty sight and a pleasant surprise. Those who utilize them can multiply double their risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Pregnant women who do not take care of their teeth are more likely to have miscarriages and give consequences of tooth plaque to their babies at risk.

Research currently being investigated at U.S. universities. The results of a completed study were presented at the 150th annual conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Philadelphia. Dr. Robert Herzberg, professor of preventive medicine at the University of Minnesota, and his animal experiments of Minnesota have shown that dental plaque that contains bacteria can cause blood clots to form and can therefore trigger a heart attack or stroke. The researchers' team found the worst culprit was the "bacterium streptococcus viridans" (strain 13379). The microorganisms were widespread in the mouth through streptococci get into the blood through periodontal infections and tooth decay.







# Free trade zone seen as test for Arab credibility

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A landmark agreement among Arab states to fulfill a long-held dream to create a free trade zone is a test of their credibility in merging their economies, an official report said Sunday.

The Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation (IAIGC) said it was optimistic the pact would work this time despite the collapse of several previous accords by the Arab League's 22 members to open up their borders.

"The free trade zone agreement is an advanced step in the process of Arab economic merger," the Kuwaiti-based group said.

"Its success will

reassert the credibility of joint Arab action, which has been undermined after facing successive crises in the past period," the IAIGC said in a study obtained here.

Bowing to long-standing calls in the region, Arab governments signed an historic accord in 1997 to lift customs barriers that have combined with political rifts and other hurdles to obstruct inter-Arab trade.

The agreement calls for a gradual removal of customs tariffs on imports at an average 10 per cent every year over a 10-year period.

The pact went into force at the start of 1998 and several League members have

already announced tariff cuts on Arab products.

It was the first Arab trade pact to include a definite timetable, the absence of which was the main cause of the collapse of former agreements. It also coincides with reforms by most member states aimed at reviving their economies and tackling persistent fiscal deficits.

"What makes us optimistic about the success of this agreement is that it involves a clear timetable which was endorsed by Arab heads of state in 1996," said IAIGC, which is affiliated to the Cairo-based Arab League.

"It is a flexible agreement that is supported by the private sector

for the first time ... It also comes as most Arab countries have joined the World Trade Organisation. This is another key factor for its feasibility," the study added.

Quoted by the IAIGC bulletin, Arab League Assistant Secretary General Abdul Rahman Al Suhaibani dismissed fears by some Arab governments about financial losses because of tariff cuts.

He said tax revenues in the Arab World totalled around \$150 million in 1996, of which only 6.5 per cent were earned from import tariffs.

Revenues from taxes on Arab products are much lower as commercial exchange

among the League members is below 10 per cent of their total trade.

"Fears by some Arab countries are baseless because earnings from customs duties on Arab imports are negligible," he said.

Apart from big customs tariffs, trade among Arab countries is restricted by persistent political rifts and border disputes, administrative burdens, and lack of trade financing.

Experts doubted the latest pact would be fully respected, citing the failure of previous experiences and problems facing a similar project within the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Although they signed a free trade agreement two years after they created their economic, political and defence alliance in 1981, GCC states are still bagging over a single tariff which is essential for their plan to create a common market.

Border disputes and political rivalries have also blocked other GCC projects, including a joint currency and linking their stock markets.

The merger process has remained slow despite the marked similarity in social, economic and political systems in GCC members — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

## IEA: Oil glut to keep pressure on producers

LONDON (R) — Glutted oil markets will continue to put pressure on revenue-hungry producers despite a groundbreaking pact to curb global output and rescue battered prices, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has said.

Supply exceeded demand by a hefty 1.5 million barrels-a-day (bpd) in the first quarter of the year, leaving stocks to build heavily, the West's energy watchdog said.

"Current supply exceeds demand and stocks are high, suggesting a continuation of a difficult market for producers," the Paris-based agency said in its monthly oil market report.

Last month, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) approved an agreement to remove 1.245 million bpd of its output from the market between April 1 and the end of the year to nudge up prices that had sagged to nine-year lows.

In a rare act of cooperation with the OPEC coun-

tries, other producers such as Norway and Mexico pledged cuts last month of 270,000 bpd, while Russia later chipped in with cuts of 61,000 bpd.

But prices have been under pressure since the output cuts were agreed because of doubts about participants' resolve to actually carry out the reductions.

Traders say it could be several more weeks before firm evidence emerges that crude sales have been curbed.

Producers have seen Brent average a punishing \$4.50 a barrel less so far this year than in 1997, cutting export earnings for OPEC member countries by some \$8 billion in the first quarter of 1998.

The report by the IEA said it had lowered its estimate of global oil demand in the first quarter of 1998 by 400,000 bpd to 75 million bpd.

It said this was due to continuing mild weather in the northern hemisphere and a

marked reduction in deliveries to South Korea in the first two months of the year.

"Demand remains sensitive to further downward revision," it said.

The agency also revised downwards 1998 non-OPEC supply by 300,000 bpd to 45.3 million bpd.

Further pressure on oil producers will come from European refinery maintenance, which will take a hefty 1.1 million bpd of capacity out of the market in May, the agency said.

It said European refinery work would peak in May after taking out 680,000 bpd of capacity in April with about 560,000 bpd of plant down for repairs in June.

The agency noted commercial oil stocks held by the world's industrialised nations appeared to register a surprising and sizeable decline in February.

Preliminary data showed commercial inventories of crude and petroleum products held in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) fell by one million bpd in February, reversing a build of that size in January.

The agency said one explanation was that it may have overestimated world oil supply in the early part of 1998, but even given future revisions to supply data there would remain a large inventory overhang.

## U.S. will push hard to open markets

GENEVA (R) — The top U.S. trade official in Geneva says her country will push hard in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to ensure markets around the globe are opened up to its products.

In an interview with Reuters, Washington's ambassador to the WTO, Rita Hayes, indicated the United States also aimed to "provide leadership" in the 132-member body by complying with rulings in trade disputes that go against it.

Ms. Hayes said she wanted to see China, involved in the latest round of talks on its 11-year entry bid, coming into the WTO but argued Beijing itself had to make "those hard decisions" that would clear the way for admission.

"I think in this community at the WTO everybody looks to the United States for leadership, because we are the world's leading exporter," said Ms. Hayes, who took up her post last autumn after three years as Washington's senior textile negotiator.

The United States, which played a key role in shaping the 1994 global accord that created the WTO, was determined to ensure that rules on open trade were observed by making full use of the body's dispute settlement system, she declared.

Of the 120 cases brought in the WTO's first three years, 41 — far more than any other member — were initiated by Washington.

These include cases against the European Union

(EU), Canada and Japan as well as key emerging economies in Latin America and Asia. Panel rulings on many are still pending.

"The United States is going to bring these cases because we want to make sure the trade rules are enforced," said Ms. Hayes, famed among WTO envoys for tough talking in her previous role.

The U.S. market was open for other countries in the organisation under the rules, but 96 per cent of the world's population was outside the United States.

"So it is our responsibility to our manufacturers, our farmers, our consumers and everyone we are representing to ensure we have access to other people's markets," she added.

Other WTO members had an obligation under the agreements they signed at the end of the 1986-93 Uruguay Round of global trade negotiations to open up to imports.

"If they don't, then we're going to use the resources we have. As more and more countries realise we are taking this seriously, the (better the) system will work," said Ms. Hayes.

When the body was created, some senior congressional figures in Washington argued that allowing independent WTO panels to rule on the legality of aspects of U.S. trade policy would violate national sovereignty.

But Ms. Hayes said the WTO "serves the interests of the United States because it reflects our val-

ues... it is a rules-based organisation, promotes openness and establishes norms."

"Of course, everybody would like to win every case, but sometimes you don't get the decisions you'd like. Sometimes you don't win on all points, but you've achieved something," she added.

Ms. Hayes pointed to the U.S. acceptance of a final ruling against it in only the second case to come before the WTO — brought by Venezuela and Brazil in 1995 over U.S. restrictions on imports of reformulated gasoline.

"Everyone was looking to see if we were going to do the right thing. We did, and we fully expect (other countries) to abide by the rules... we stand on our record so far," she indicated.

The more both developed and developing countries used the system, the more countries not yet in the WTO like China and Russia would see the advantages of getting in.

"I want to see China in the WTO because I think it's always better to have someone a member so that they live by the same rules that you do. But it has to make some decisions before it can join," she said.

It's not any other country keeping China out, it's China that's got to make those hard decisions," said Ms. Hayes, in a clear rejection of complaints sometimes voiced by Beijing that the United States is blocking its admission.

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**The Daily Crossword** Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

THSPuzzles@aol.com

**ACROSS**

- 1 Lens setting
- 6 "Hartley"
- 10 Crack shots
- 14 Tropical vine
- 15 Sioux tribe
- 16 Zhigago's love
- 17 Adjustment
- 19 Jogging gait
- 20 Scarf like a snake
- 21 Stilled
- 22 Veneration
- 23 First among men?
- 24 Began
- 25 Shout
- 26 Severe
- 28 Film cuts
- 31 Dwellers; suit
- 32 vinct omnia
- 36 Gin-and-tonic garnish
- 37 Ginger cookies
- 38 Prevailing trend
- 39 Shapely fruit
- 40 Elevator man
- 41 Sully singer
- 42 Showed concern
- 44 Shunt
- 45 Something that rots
- 48 Composer
- 49 Wax
- 50 grandiloquent
- 51 Martini peak
- 52 Anne des
- 53 Salvador, the artist
- 55 AC generator
- 56 Norway's capital
- 59 Facts
- 60 Simple
- 61 neccidoe
- 61 Actor Connery
- 62 Ogler
- 63 Two under par

**DOWN**

- 1 Loose weight
- 2 Farm tower
- 3 Casual farewell
- 4 First grade
- 5 Military displays
- 6 Clean emblem
- 7 Learning precariously
- 8 Approximate distance measure
- 9 Bo Derek flick
- 10 Option
- 11 Insertion mark
- 12 Worn away
- 13 Fully full
- 14 Halfway month
- 16 Bony fish
- 23 Vehement quarrel
- 25 Hardy lass
- 26 Support
- 27 Garfield's pal
- 28 Peru's capital
- 29 Overly sedate
- 31 Reciprocal action and reaction
- 33 Deep, slimy soil
- 34 River to the Baltic
- 35 Landlord's due
- 37 Smarming
- 41 Quiet!
- 43 First mate's reply
- 44 Active one
- 45 Long gongs
- 46 Delete
- 47 Showy fly
- 48 Transparent
- 51 Back of the kitchen?
- 52 Single guy
- 53 Hard work
- 54 Coastal bird
- 56 George, the humorist
- 57 Spotter's cry

**Peanuts**

WHEN I GET BIGGER, I'M GOING TO BE A NEWSBOY, AND STAND ON THE CORNER, AND SHOUT, 'EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!'

"LINDBERGH FLIES ACROSS THE OCEAN!"

THAT'S RIGHT...

YOU NEED A BLANKET LIKE YOUR BROTHER!

**Andy Capp**

YOU AND THAT FLIPPING SNOOKER ROOM! IT'S A WONDER YOU DON'T GET ME TO BRING YOUR DINNER OVER THERE AND SAVE YOURSELF THE TROUBLE!

HE WAS THINKING ABOUT IT!

**Mutt'n'Jeff**

HERE'S THE LITTLE HAND JEFF!

AND HERE'S THE BIG ONE.

HEY, WHAT TIME IS IT?

**HOROSCOPE**

FOR CAST FOR MONDAY, APRIL 13, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You're being watched like a hawk. The good news is that you could profit from this encounter. You should be standing up, crisply saluting all the superior officers who pass your way. You could make a marvellous impression on an influential older person, who can help you get what you want.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You tend to hold onto things. Accept coaching from one who's near and dear to your heart, and trash some of those items you've been reluctant to part with. If you can't trash them, at least put them on the market. May be you can sell them.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) You'll have more invitations today than you can possibly accept. There are parties and meetings and chores. Start by setting priorities. Write up a list, then arrange everything in a workable order. It won't take long if you do it early. Concentration is the key.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) Somebody in a position of authority is angry at a person you feel very dear about. It's no secret whose side you're on, but don't flaunt it in front of the authority figure. You'll have to tread gently, but you're good at that.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You're interested in travelling, but you're more likely stuck at home, due to a cold or minor injury. Even if you're healthy, there are matters at home that require your presence. In other words, you're grounded. Don't fret. This is only a temporary condition.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You're drawing attention to yourself. Co-workers want you to do more for them. That's because you are so well organised. You're also learning skills that make you more valuable. So if you're bombarded with demands, don't take offence. It's a compliment.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Take time to discuss finances today with your partner — business or romantic, or both. It's important to understand how much there is, where it's going and where the next is coming from. This conversation might be difficult, but the result will be beneficial.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) You're feeling strong and magnificent. This is good, because you've got formidable competition. A co-worker doesn't want to do things your way. It's going to take a little while, but you'll win this battle. And you'll be gracious in victory, so start now. You have the advantage, so why rub it in?

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) You're under pressure, but that's OK. You're strong, healthy and good looking. It looks like some big bureaucracy — perhaps the IRS — is trying to put the squeeze on you. Well, you might be able to fight back. It's people like you who change laws. Have you become an activist yet?

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) You and your committee can accomplish amazing things. You have some strong people on your team. You could be the leader, but you're not necessarily making big major decisions. You're likely the person who carries them out. That's OK. You'll accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Instead of seeing an older person as being your enemy, see that person as your coach. Even if he or she is irritating, there's a lesson to be learned here. Pay attention. The situation today may be forcing you to learn a lesson you've been avoiding.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You're lucky, but somebody close to you isn't. You're so tuned in to what's going on around you that, when somebody else gets crazy, you do too. It's difficult for you to break away and just simply have your own emotions, but that would be a good idea now.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

**THE BETTER HALF.** By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN

"Your bottom lip is doing all the work. Let's kiss again, this time with both lips giving 100 percent!"

**JUMBLE.** THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Hunt Arnold and Mike Arghon

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GEELY  
DOLYD  
COLKUN  
RAWHTT

Answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

Yesterday's Jumbles: TWILL SKUNK BRIDGE WHENCE  
Answer: What the chemist added to his acid cream — NEW WRINKLES

**Energy**

Oil	Last	revised
Brent	12.27	12.92
Crude	15.57	15.87
Gasoline	12.27	12.92
Heating Oil	12.14	11.74
Coal	163.00	0.00

**Currency**

	US\$	YEN	DM	GBP	CHF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Yen	0.0094	1.0000	0.0094	0.0094	0.0094
DM	0.6366	106.36	1.0000	0.6366	0.6366
GBP	0.6546	154.36	1.6546	1.0000	0.7936
CHF	1.1366	120.36	1.7366	1.3366	1.0000

**Main Equity Index**

	Index	Value
New York	DOW JONES	8994.96
London	S&P 500	1118.87
Tokyo	FT-SE 100	5186.5
Paris	NIKKEI 225	16481.12
Frankfurt	CAC 40	3284.48
	DAX	617.22

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**World Business Daily**

A review of news

**Irsheidat expects**

from po

**ARAB POTASH**

Chairman Salah Irsheidat expects a new agreement to be reached by the end of the year. The agreement will allow the Arab states to export potash to the West, which has been a long-held dream. The agreement will also allow the Arab states to export potash to the West, which has been a long-held dream.

**Government urges**

**Jordan Spinning**

**THE GENERAL**

members in the spinning industry have been urged to intervene to prevent the closure of the Jordan Spinning Mills. The mills have been facing financial difficulties and the government has urged the industry to intervene to prevent the closure of the mills.

**Arumex announce**

**statement relating**

**REUTERS**

**The Business**

**Major Currencies & Cross Rates**

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Yen	0.0094	1.0000	0.0094	0.0094
DM	0.6366	1.0000	0.6366	0.6366
GBP	0.6546	1.6546	1.0000	0.7936
CHF	1.1366	1.7366	1.3366	1.0000

**Energy**

Oil	Last	revised
Brent	12.27	12.92
Crude	15.57	15.87
Gasoline	12.27	12.92
Heating Oil	12.14	11.74
Coal	163.00	0.00

**Currency**

	US\$	YEN	DM	GBP	CHF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Yen	0.0094	1.0000	0.0094	0.0094	0.0094
DM	0.6366	106.36	1.0000	0.6366	0.6366
GBP	0.6546	154.36	1.6546	1.0000	0.7936
CHF	1.1366	120.36	1.7366	1.3366	1.0000

**Main Equity Index**

	Index	Value
New York	DOW JONES	8994.96
London	S&P 500	1118.87
Tokyo	FT-SE 100	5186.5
Paris	NIKKEI 225	16481.12
Frankfurt	CAC 40	3284.48
	DAX	617.22

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# Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

## Irsheidat expects APC to earn JD111 million from potash sales in '98

**\*\* ARAB POTASH COMPANY (APC)** Chairman Saleh Irsheidat expects sales to reach JD111 million in 1998 in light of increasing demand for potash and opening new markets. He revealed that APC earned JD103 million last year from selling 1.8 million tonnes of potash.

## Government urged to intervene to save Jordan Spinning and Weaving Company

**\*\* THE GENERAL association of the workers in the spinning, weaving and clothing industry** has asked the government to intervene to prevent the liquidation of the Jordan Spinning and Weaving Company and to safeguard the rights of the shareholders and the workers in order to avoid increasing the number of the unemployed.

The association said that mismanagement was the principal cause for the company's troubles and charged that there is a plan by some people to take over the company at extremely low prices. The company has posted an accumulated loss of JD8 million until the end of last year and its debt totalled JD12 million. The shareholders' equity stood at JD658,483 at the end of 1997.

In its demand, the association recommended forming a committee to manage the company for three years and to restructure the financial situation by fully or partially capitalising the debts and rescheduling the rest without interest in addition to providing the working capital to enable the plant continue operations and production.

The association concluded by pointing out that the company was expected to continue growing and prospering as a result of the increasing demand on its high-quality and low-cost products. "The reserves soared and reached millions but the amounts quickly evaporated and the company fell back after being an industrial leader and the sole manufacturer in its field," the association said as it stressed the mismanagement as the main cause for the company's demise (Al Dustour + Al Arab Al Yawm).

## Aramex announces filing of registration statement relating to secondary offering

**AMMAN (J.T.) — Aramex International Limited**, the international express and freight forwarding company specialising in the Middle East & Indian Sub-Continent regions, announced that it filed a registration statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission relating to the offer of 1,000,000 shares of its Common Stock in a proposed underwritten public offering to be managed by Scott & Stringfellow, Inc. located in Richmond, Virginia. Of the 1,000,000 shares proposed to be offered, 500,000 shares are being offered by Aramex and 500,000 shares are being offered by certain selling shareholders.

Aramex currently operates in 95 locations in 32 countries, providing express delivery and freight forwarding services from its main hubs in Dubai, London, New York and Amman primarily to, from and within destinations in the Middle East and the Indian Sub-Continent. Aramex also holds a majority interest in a direct marketing and mail order catalogue service located in the Middle East.

A registration statement relating to these securities has been filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission but has not yet become effective. These securities may not be sold nor may offers to buy be accepted prior to the time the registration statement becomes effective.

# Travel agents open fire on transport companies

By Amy Henderson  
Special to the Jordan Times

**AMMAN — A fair competition and anti-trust law** relegated to parliament's backburner has left travel agents and transport companies at odds over "price fixing" by the latter, which are currently operating as a consortium.

"What the transport companies are doing is state of the art stupidity," said one travel agent, whose business caters to religious pilgrims worldwide. "The industry is being ruined by the transport companies who have recreated a monopoly that we fought for years to get rid of."

Travel agents are complaining that the country's three tourist transport operators — Jordan Express Tourist Transport (JETT), Alpha and Petra — have "artificially" pushed prices up since they formed a consortium last September to stem growing financial losses.

Last July, an Alpha board member said the sector's losses for the year would be about JD2.5 million, largely attributed to an oversupply of buses on the market and a drop in arrivals to Jordan due to regional crises that began in 1996. The two factors encouraged a price war between the three, another source of financial loss.

Prices for this high season remained unchanged even as cancellations began pouring in late last year when the United States and Iraq appeared on the brink of war, agents said.

Travel agents, now actively lobbying parliament to endorse the anti-trust law that would force the end of the consortium, claim that since September, price hikes have ranged from 10 to 40 per cent — and in some cases have exceeded 90 per cent.

Daily rental fares have been reduced, but overall rental costs have risen when the consortium imposed mileage fees, along with other tolls, in exchange. This practice, they say, is exclusive to Jordan — at least in the region.

"The fact that they have been allowed to get away with this [consortium] is outrageous," said Munir Nassar, head of International Traders, one of the country's top travel agencies. "The government doesn't allow hotels to [fix prices]. Why are we protecting the buses?"

"Anyway, price is secondary," he said. "It's really a question of quality and providing a choice to consumers."

Government-owned JETT enjoyed a 20-year monopoly over the transport sector until 1994. It maintained a de facto control of the market until 1995 when a windfall tourism season following the October 1994 peace

treary with Israel caught JETT unaware and unable to accommodate the influx of tourists.

The government was forced to rent foreign buses to meet immediate requirements and to licence other companies in anticipation of swelling demand.

Agents welcomed the move in anticipation of competition in pricing and higher standards of service — both of which they got, they say.

"The service we received was absolutely better than what we received from JETT," said one agent, "and prices were reasonable and competitive with our neighbours."

Now, he says, the buses are operating on a "seating quota," and agents can no longer request one transport provider over another.

"Our clients get what [the consortium] gives us. We can no longer guarantee any standard of service," he continued. "There is no fear from drivers that they will lose their jobs if they mistreat their passengers. We simply have no recourse. We should be doing the opposite to bring people here — we should be bringing our prices down and working very hard to improve our service," he indicated.

"We must be the only country in the world that thinks it should tax the tourist when we have a bad

season," said Mr. Nassar. "Do you think the Egyptians put prices up after the incident at Luxor?"

Transport companies claimed in September that the consortium was not a price cartel, but "a mechanism to save the sector from collapse in the medium term."

Shafiq Hayec, general manager of Alpha, said that the arrangement was "minimised" the financial losses of the three, but refused to disclose any financial statistics.

"You can't call it a monopoly," he said. "Each company still has its own independent administration. We entered the agreement to organise the reservation departments."

However, he conceded that the consortium did "issue a single rate" since last September.

Ironically, travel agents do not place the entirety of the blame for the situation on the transport operators, but on the government, which they accuse of drafting a transport law that favoured JETT's control of the sector.

Under the regulations established in 1992, new transport companies must have a minimum of 50 buses and a JD10 million capital. According to a source in the transport industry, the 270 buses that went onto the market exceeded the 150 required by demand. (The consortium now operates with 80 buses, according to the source.)

"The government didn't expect that investors would go for those requirements," says Mr. Nassar. "But they did, and as a result, the market was flooded. The law was foolish."

In a bid to defuse the row, the Ministry of Tourism has appointed a committee to study the arguments of both. The solution, says Faded Faneek, who is working on the study, is far from simple.

"The study found that the prices, on average, did increase about 22 per cent over the discounted prices — which discriminated among operators — offered before the consortium," he pointed out.

"But the agents have presented all these examples from neighbouring countries which, the operators have shown, are not really applicable to Jordan. So it seems that both have valid arguments," he said. "The solution, until the situation improves, may be to impose the prices as fixed by the ministry [in 1995] which are close to those being imposed now."

Dr. Faneek said the committee expects to present its findings and recommendations to the minister of tourism later this week for a final decision on the issue.

## Investment bank buys Fauchon

**PARIS (AFP) — A group of French and foreign investors**, led by a Luxembourg bank, has acquired the century-old Paris fine foods store Fauchon, which describes itself as the world's premier gourmet firm.

Laurent Adamowicz, head of Luxembourg-based investment bank Waldo, said he had purchased a 51 per cent stake in the prestige emporium, with the rest shared out equally between three firms and three people.

He refused to put a tag on the deal, believed to amount to around \$33 million.

The landmark family store, established for more than a century on the Place de la Madeleine in central Paris, was founded by Auguste Fauchon in 1886 and boasts it can provide any food product known to man, however exotic.

Its mouth-watering out-of-season fruit and dilligant delicacies draw perennial crowds of avid window-shoppers as well as a steady stream of well-heeled customers stepping out of some of the world's most expensive cars.

The minority 49 per cent will be in the hands of Michel Ducros, of the French spices family enterprise, two former managers of the Docks de France supermarket chain, Britain's Intermediate Capital Group, Barclays Capital Development and France's Maitron Investment Group.

Adamowicz, aged 40 and formerly of the Paribas and Rothschild banks, was reported by the Le Figaro daily to be offering a global 200 million francs (\$33 million).

The firm had a turnover of 296 million francs (\$49 million) in 1996-97, or 800 million francs (\$147 million) taking into account its distributors and franchises in 30 countries.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKH SAH											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 12/04/1998											
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH	PART 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENT
350.000	251.000	ARAB BANK	14.2	1.15	12	860	330460	350.00	347.00	3.00	0.86
1.34	1.00	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	6	4500	2875	1.78	1.75	0.03	1.69
1.760	1.200	BANK OF JORDAN	4.3	0.00	2	650	878	1.45	1.35	0.10	7.14
1.760	1.200	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.3	7.83	32	22000	34400	1.70	1.60	0.10	6.25
1.760	1.200	JOR. INVESTMENT BK.	17.2	2.86	4	800	4365	5.49	5.42	0.07	1.27
1.760	1.200	JOR. REALTY BK.	8	0.00	1	2000	3600	1.82	1.82	0.00	0.00
1.760	1.200	JOR. TRADING BK.	4.0	10.45	37	80000	55303	1.64	1.64	0.00	0.00
1.760	1.200	JOR. COMM. BK.	9.4	3.12	16	2666	4991	1.09	1.05	0.04	3.80
1.760	1.200	JOR. SECURITIES	5	17.05	7	2000	1730	1.16	1.16	0.00	0.00
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 241.66	CHNG: -0.84	117	123326	351604				
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.0	11.68	2	10290	21535	2.11	2.14	0.03	1.42
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 122.71	CHNG: +0.05	2	10290	21535				
2.160	1.560	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.2	4.74	5	750	1584	2.14	2.11	0.03	1.42
4.010	1.100	JOR. TELECOM	13.0	5.25	1	300	329	2.09	2.09	0.00	0.00
1.550	1.400	NATL. PORTFOLIO	44.3	0.00	34	28523	31754	1.12	1.11	0.01	0.90
1.120	1.050	JOR. ESTATE INV.	10.0	0.00	4	171	156	1.12	1.12	0.00	0.00
4.600	1.000	ARAB INTL. INV. FUND	10.3	1.93	1	100	425	4.15	4.15	0.00	0.00
1.090	1.000	FARSA EDUCATION	16.9	0.00	2	2000	2620	1.06	1.06	0.00	0.00
1.830	1.000	UNIFIED CO.	6.9	7.10	5	1050	1028	1.16	1.16	0.00	0.00
1.810	1.000	UNION LLOYD INC.	9	0.00	4	10800	6810	1.04	1.04	0.00	0.00
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 119.71	CHNG: -0.38	56	43546	44594				
4.450	2.690	JOR. CHEM. FACT.	19.0	3.90	40	23113	65318	2.77	2.82	0.05	1.81
4.140	3.040	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	8.5	3.28	1	100	305	3.10	3.05	0.05	1.64
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	8.15	12	7687	29679	10.80	10.90	0.10	0.92
5.760	4.500	JORDAN TANNING	8.0	7.21	1	50	278	5.55	5.55	0.00	0.00
1.350	1.050	MOLEN INDUSTRIES	12.0	7.18	2	600	834	1.32	1.32	0.00	0.00
2.240	1.100	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AG.	9	0.00	3	2637	3216	1.29	1.25	0.04	3.20
5.700	3.400	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	14.6	3.77	32	13850	63167	5.37	5.30	0.07	1.32
1.520	1.000	JOR. PIPES FACTORY	11.1	7.46	17	3900	5283	1.35	1.34	0.01	0.74
1.570	1.000	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	16.9	0.00	1	250	125	1.50	1.50	0.00	0.00
1.620	1.000	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	5	1327	729	1.54	1.54	0.00	0.00
1.610	1.000	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	2400	974	1.41	1.40	0.01	0.71
1.570	1.000	JOR. ROCHAMOND	9	0.00	2	200	110	1.52	1.52	0.00	0.00
3.000	1.000	NATL. CABLE WIRE-MFAC	27.9	0.00	10	5800	6672	1.15	1.16	0.01	0.86
1.790	1.000	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	6	5100	2958	1.59	1.58	0.01	0.63
1.540	1.000	UNIV. WOOD INDS.	14.0	6.45	11	8850	6371	1.93	1.93	0.00	0.00
1.230	1.000	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.2	14.48	14	10800	7518	1.71	1.69	0.02	1.18
1.620	1.350	NATL. CHLORINE	14.0	4.73	6	1150	1702	1.48	1.48	0.00	0.00
1.080	1.000	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	14.4	9.80	11	11000	11290	1.04	1.02	0.02	1.96
1.750	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	6	6700	7673	1.18	1.18	0.00	0.00
1.220	1.000	UNION CH. & VEG.	47.0	0.00	2	550	578	1.05	1.05	0.00	0.00
1.880	1.000	JORDAN STEEL	8.2	8.23	4	950	798	1.04	1.04	0.00	0.00
800	1.000	MTC EAST COMPLEX	7.8	18.07	11	15750	9923	1.05	1.05	0.00	0.00
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 110.22	CHNG: +0.01	202	113964	725895				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 170.59	CHNG: -0.53	371	291086	643659				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 12/04/1998											
1.620	1.480	MACH. EOP. RENT. MAIN.	30.2	0.00	1	200	110	1.58	1.58	0.00	0.00
1.510	1.440	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	12	47300	18846	1.39	1.39	0.00	0.00
1.800	1.440	UNION INV. SOF.	9	0.30	11	35445	1849	1.72	1.75	0.03	1.74
1.620	1.360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.30	13	6050	3339	1.67	1.67	0.00	0.00
1.000	1.000	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	1	10000	10000	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
1.780	1.000	JOR. INDS. FACTORY	11.1	7.46	17	3900	5283	1.35	1.34	0.01	0.74
1.640	1.000	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	3	9000	4000	1.11	1.11	0.00	0.00
1.470	1.000	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	46.1	0.00	54	173480	72470	1.41	1.40	0.01	0.71
1.540	1.000	NATL. WIRE & CABLE	9	0.00	6	4000	1520	1.52	1.52	0.00	0.00
1.520	1.000	ARAB ELECT. INDS.	9	0.00	5	967	426	1.38	1.38	0.00	0.00
1.690	1.000	MIDEST PETRO. 80%	9	0.00	1	100	43	1.63	1.63	0.00	0.00
1.610	1.000	UNION TOBACCO 75%	9	0.00	6	2884	2884	1.04	1.04	0.00	0.00
1.730	1.000	RAZI PHARM.	9	0.30	6	3816	2633	1.67	1.67	0.00	0.00
1.460	1.000	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	8	7350	1990	1.23	1.23	0.00	0.00
1.510	1.000	CHC. CERAMIC	13.1	0.30	11	1500	20980	1.63	1.63	0.00	0.00
1.950	1.000	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	11	34200	20980	1.63	1.63	0.00	0.00
1.740	1.000	NATL. POLYMER	9	0.00	26	78000	36600	1.47	1.47	0.00	0.00
1.000	1.000	NAT. AERIALION. 75%	46.2	0.00	16	15750	7065	1.04	1.04	0.00	0.00
1.310	1.000	MUTIRAD	9	0.30	4	4500	4555	1.03	1.04	0.01	0.96
1.000	1.000	ENHAR PRINT CO. 75%	12.6	9.13	1	400	232	1.03	1.03	0.00	0.00
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 192	CHNG: 446323	198864						

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates										Prices as at 12/04/98 18:12			
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF				
US Dollar	-	1.8216	0.5977	1.5129	128.50	1.4259	1802.26	2.0512	6.1062				
DE Mark	0.5490	-	0.3279	0.8306	70.90	0.7826	989.16	1.1262	3.3521				
GB Sterling	1.6730	3.0482	-	2.5311	215.24	2.3665	3015.19	3.4377	10.2157				
CH Franc	0.6510	120.32	0.3946	-	84.98	0.9419	1190.47	135.49	4.0334				
JP Yen	0.0078	1.4163	0.4642	1.1755	-	1.1079	14.00	169.38	4.7446				
CA Dollar	0.7013	1.2919	0.4228	1.0868	1.11	-	1270.80	1.4651	4.3266				
TL Lira	0.0006	1.0104	0.3314	0.8339	1403.11	0.7910	-	11.38	3.3872				
NL Guilder	0.4875	88.76	0.2911	1.0676	62.65	0.6948	878.20	-	2.9754				
FR Franc	0.1638	0.2882	0.0078	24.7683	21.04	0.2334	33.68	33.5900	-				

Middle Eastern Currencies													
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP				
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7502	0.3770	3.9410	6.3052	3.6729	1523.00	3.4000				
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2094	0.5317	5.1354	6.4305	5.1804	2165.15	4.7955				
Saudi Riyal	0.2667	0.1891	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0914	0.98	407.44	0.9068				
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9480	-	8.66	0.8096	9.74	4053.27	0.9190				
Qatar Dinar	0.2746	0.1947	1.0300	1.0300	-	0.0838	1.01	419.66	0.9338				
Kuwait Dinar	3.2765	2.3231	12.2877	1.2362	11.93	-	12.03	506.06	0.9338				
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0210	1.0260	0.9913	0.0631	-	419.62	0.9257				
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4640	2.4543	0.2467	2.3823	0.1997	2.4037	-	2.2251				
Egyptian	0.2341	0.2085	1.1030	0.1109	1.0709	0.0938	1.0803	449.41	-				

Energy				Mid-East Currencies					
Oilse	Last	revision		Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Brent	13.27	12.92		SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4988	0.18939	0.40368	34.1183
W. Texas	16.87	15.87		AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4908	0.18274	0.42118	35.041
Bonny	13.27	12.92		KW Dinar	3.2755	5.97016	1.95848	4.98032	421.783
Dubai	12.14	11.74		BH Dinar	0.3770	4.83225	1.85854	0.61066	341.413
UL Gas	183.00	0.00		CY Pound	1.574	3.4135	1.1195	2.8362	240.998

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pt Cls		
NewYork	DOW JONES	8994.86	103.38	1.16	9014.43	8980.74	8991.48		
Newyork	S&P 500	1110.67	9.02	0.82	1111.48	1101.66	1101.68		
London	FT-SE 100	6105.5	50.3	0.83	6105.5	6038.6	6055.2		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16481.12	-65.54	-0.34	16520.5	16268.3	16268.7		
Paris	CAC 40	3994.48	20.51	0.53	3997.72	3942.41	3973.57		
Frankfurt	DAX	5317.22	47.76	0.91	5320.49	5296.14	5298.46		



# Argentine GP

## Coulthard snatches pole but Ferrari splits McLarens

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Scotland's David Coulthard snatched his first pole position for three years when he put his McLaren Mercedes in top spot during Saturday's qualifying for the Argentine Grand Prix.

Coulthard clocked 1min 25.852 round the slippery, bumpy 2.646 mile circuit.

But instead of his teammate Mika Hakkinen, who has won the opening two races of the season, lining up beside him on the front row, he will make the dash to the first bend with the Ferrari of Michael Schumacher.

The double world champion, revelling in the tricky conditions, clocked 1:26.251.

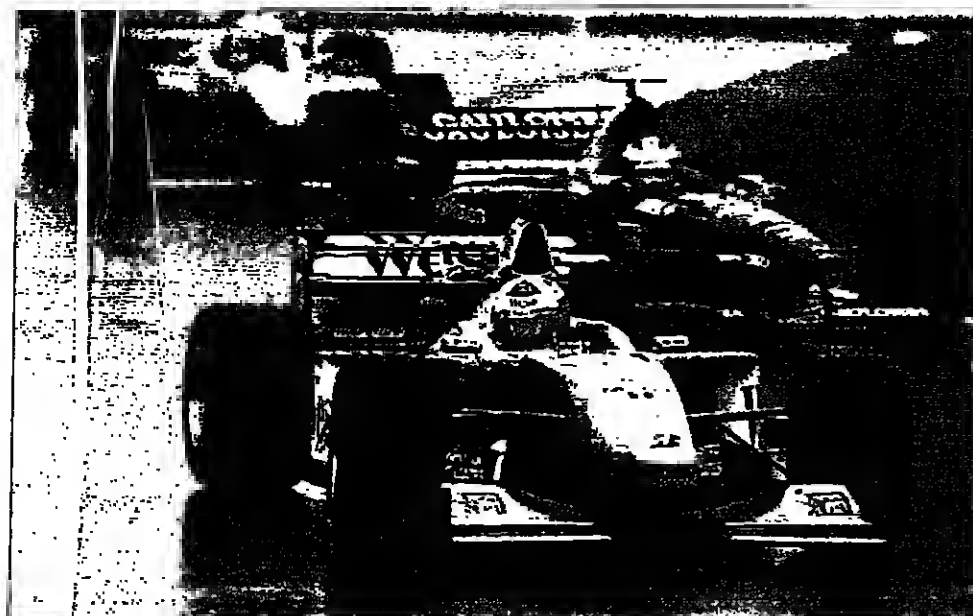
Hakkinen could only manage third fastest, just ahead of the other Ferrari of Eddie Irvine.

"It's a great feeling to be back on pole. It almost feels like a race victory rather than just having the right to start a few metres ahead," beamed Coulthard.

"It's what I wanted because it's frustrating coming second all the time, but now I need to end the weekend with a victory."

"I thought the competition would be closer here, but at least we have still got a small advantage. I knew Michael's early time would be hard to beat but I just kept plugging away and managed to do so."

"But this is only half of it. What I need now is to ensure that I come out of the first corner in front because



Scottish Formula One driver from the McLaren team, David Coulthard, leads Prost team's Olivier Panis and Ferrari team's Michael Schumacher (back), during a warm-up run a few hours before race time on the Oscar Galvez track April 12. Coulthard earned the pole position to start the Argentine Grand Prix. (Reuters photo)

then I should be able to control the race."

It was a stunning performance from the two Ferrari drivers who had been totally outclassed by the all-conquering McLarens in Australia and Brazil.

But running with wider Goodyear tyres on the front, Schumacher and Irvine showed that the expected runaway season predicted for the McLarens was far from a certainty.

Schumacher said afterwards that he was delighted to have split the McLarens as he predicted he could.

"The miracle has happened," said Schumacher, referring to Hakkinen's

claim that his and Coulthard's rivals would need divine intervention to catch them.

"Before the weekend I didn't think it would be possible to get pole, but during qualifying you start to think about it. It would have been good, but it shows we are getting closer."

Defending champion Jacques Villeneuve had to settle for the fourth row. But his Williams teammate Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who has consistently outpaced him this season, was sixth fastest and will line-up alongside Ralf Schumacher in the Jordan.

A disappointed Damon Hill in the second Jordan was ninth fastest. It was a bitter blow for the former champion who was fifth fastest in the morning's unofficial practice session.

Coulthard's pole spot will give his World Championship hopes a massive boost. Coulthard has insisted all weekend that he could claim pole and duly delivered on his third run, displacing Schumacher with nearly 0.4sec to spare.

The 27-year-old Scot must now turn the advantage into a race victory, which would put him in a stronger position before the Grand Prix circus heads for Europe later this month.

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## Lens reach French Cup final

LENS (AFP) — Lens reached the final of the French Cup here on Saturday with a 2-0 victory over Lyon thanks to goals from Stephane Ziani.

Lens's passionate fans chanted their delight at reaching the final where they will play either Paris Saint Germain or Guingamp who meet Sunday evening.

Lens should have gone ahead when Frederic Dehu hit a ferocious shot just skimming past the goal of Gregory Coupet midway through the first half.

But Czech Vladimir Smicer made amends in the 24th minute to feed Ziani and the former Bordeaux midfielder made no mistake. At the beginning of the second half, Lyon began to take the initiative.

Christophe Delmotte's header from a Christophe Cocard cross just went over the bar of Guillaume Warmuz and Lyon must have rued that missed chance.

In the closing minutes Lens regained the upper hand. A Tony Vairelles centre found Smicer whose header hit the crossbar.

Then Cameroon's Marc Vivien Foe missed an empty goal on the rebound and set up Vairelles who this time just failed to get the ball on target.

The pressure paid off in the last minute when a move involving Mickael Debeve and Vairelles got the Lyon defence on the back foot and Ziani easily hit home the second.

However Lens coach Daniel Leclercq, eager to follow in Auxerre's footsteps of two seasons ago by winning the league and Cup double, said: "The Cup is now history."

We are already thinking of Friday's match in the league against Cannes. It's just as important as a final of the French Cup," Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas hoped Paris Saint Germain would win the other semi-final meaning both finalists would be already qualified for Europe, leaving a further UEFA Cup place for his sixth-placed side. "It will make things easier for us if Paris win," Aulas said.



Brazilian Roma player Paulo Sergio (L) is upside down as he kicks the ball while Argentine Internazionale Milan's player Xavier Zanetti looks on during their Italian Serie A soccer match in Rome. Inter Milan won the match 2-1 (Reuters photo)

## Ronaldo brings Inter glory

MILAN (AFP) — Ronaldo all but repaid his \$30 million transfer fee on Saturday when he earned Inter Milan a crucial 2-1 win over AS Roma that kept the heat on Serie A leaders Juventus.

Juventus stay a point clear at the top after an easy 2-0 victory over lowly Piacenza, while an era of Italian football came to an end when Diego Maradona's old club Napoli were relegated. Juventus had to wait for the 53rd minute to break the deadlock in Turin.

Alessandro Del Piero curled over a corner and French midfielder Zidane Zidane trapped the ball before smacking it into the roof of the net.

Del Piero, currently linked with a move to the English Premiership, followed up with a fine solo goal, his 20th of the season.

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi dismissed his side's early difficulty, saying: "When is it ever easy in the Serie A? The thing to do in games like this is to keep calm and put the ball forward when you get the chance."

As for Inter, he said: "I didn't expect either good news or bad news from the Olympic stadium. All I wanted was for Juventus to win." Ronaldo, who was booked for a foul at the end of the first half, was once again Inter Milan's hero.

The 21-year-old beat the offside trap in the 50th minute with a chip from Frenchman Benoit Cauet and rounded goalkeeper Michael Konsel before slotting the ball into an empty net.

Fellow Brazilian Cafu equalized for Roma soon afterwards, but Ronaldo struck again in the 75th minute, collecting a ball from Argentina's Javier Zanetti and again coming face to face with Konsel.

This time, the Austrian keeper managed to block but he failed to hold the ball and Ronaldo once again knocked it into an empty net, his 21st

league goal of the season also making him the Serie A's joint top scorer. Inter coach Gigi Simoni said: "We played well, and we were made to suffer against a top quality side. But we managed to play our game and in the second half we got the space we needed and scored the two goals. We fought from the very start to the very end and it's an important win."

As for the title race, he added: "It's fine by me if people think that Juventus are favourites, but we're only a point behind and we've got a game against them coming up." Lazio bounced back from their 1-0 defeat to Juventus and AC Milan last week to lead Brescia 1-0 before having to settle for a 1-1 draw which gives them little hope of the Champions League next season.

Roberto Rambaudi snapped up a rebound in the 10th minute after the Brescia goalkeeper failed to hold a volley from Pierluigi Casiraghi. Skipper Diego Fuser then had a goal ruled offside shortly afterwards, but his side missed a string of glaring opportunities before being rocked by Aimo Diana's 70th minute equalizer.

Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson said: "We could have won it 3-0 or 4-0, but if you don't take your chances, towards the end you inevitably get tired. It's a shame. Looking at the results of the other games, it's going to be hard now to finish first or even second. Let's just hope things take a turn for the better."

Parma meanwhile clocked up a 3-1 victory over Napoli as the southern club said "ciao" to the Italian top-flight. Napoli's last mathematical chances of avoiding the drop evaporated in the second minute when Argentina's Hernan Crespo opened the scoring, guiding home the rebound when Enrico Chiesa

hit the post. Claudio Bellucci equalised midway through the second half for Napoli but Luigi Apolloni made it 2-1 with a far post header and Crespo later tapped his second of the day into an empty net.

Napoli, who won two league titles, the Italian Cup and the UEFA Cup with Maradona between 1987-90, had been in the Serie A since 1965. German ace Oliver Bierhoff scored two second-half goals for Udinese to earn them a 2-0 win over Bari and make him the joint top scorer with Ronaldo.

George Weah, who headed AC Milan's 90th minute Italian Cup final winner against Lazio on Wednesday night, was the matchwinner again on Saturday with a hat-trick in a 3-0 victory over Atalanta.

The Liberian nodded home skipper Paolo Maldini's cross in the 10th minute, jumped acrobatically to fire home the second and sent a searing low drive through a crowded area to bring up his third.

Vicenza, who face Chelsea at Stamford Bridge in the European Cup Winners Cup on Thursday night, limbered up by drawing 1-1 away to Fiorentina.

Vicenza's Uruguayan midfielder Gustavo Mendez scored in the 11th minute, but Brazilian-turned-Belgian Luis Oliveira headed in a 33rd minute equaliser from point-blank range.

Oliveira earned his side a penalty within two minutes of the re-start but promptly missed his spot-kick. Ronaldo, Bierhoff and Crespo weren't the only strikers to score a brace on Saturday.

Vincenzo Montella brought his tally to 18 this season with two in Sampdoria's 3-0 victory over Empoli. Elsewhere, relegation strugglers Lecce drew 1-1 with Bologna.

## Carlsen cruises to 1st title victory

HONG KONG (AFP) — Kenneth Carlsen became the first Dane to win a singles title in ATP-Tour history with a crushing 6-2 6-0 victory over Byron Black in the final of the \$340,000 Hong Kong Open here Sunday.

Carlsen, who had been beaten in three previous singles finals during a six-year professional career, made it fourth time lucky with a commanding performance against his Zimbabwean opponent.

The eighth-seeded left-hander made light of a lengthy rain delay to sweep aside World No. 81 Black, who was regarded as the favourite prior to the final at Hong Kong's Victoria Park. "It's unbelievable," said a delighted Carlsen after clinching victory.

"I have been waiting to win a title for many years. I'm glad I have eventually done it. I had unbelievable rhythm today," he added.

Carlsen said he had tried to stay focused during a four-hour break caused by steady rain between the first and second games of the first set. "I read a book for a while and just tried to relax, get some sleep and stay focused. It worked well," he said.

Carlsen, who is ranked world number 76, said he hoped the win would mark an upturn in his fortunes. "I've started this year very well. I've had a couple of quarter-finals and now this win... hopefully I can keep it going," the 24-year-old added.

## Top seeds Davenport and Coetzer crash out

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida (AFP) — Fourth seed Mary Pierce of France advanced to her third straight Amelia Island final here Saturday, upsetting top-seeded American Lindsay Davenport 4-6, 6-3, 6-3. Pierce, who avenged a loss to Davenport in last year's final, will be appearing in her second WTA Tour final of the year Sunday when she faces sixth seed and 1995 champion Conchita Martinez of Spain, who dumped second seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa 6-4, 6-0.

The sixth-ranked Pierce, 23, captured the Open Gaz de France in Paris in February and was a quarter-finalist at the Australian Open.

Pierce, who had not beaten Davenport since 1993, broke Davenport in the fifth game but dropped her own serve in the next with a double fault.

Pierce won the next three games, a double fault from Davenport giving her the only match point she needed.

Martinez, who will turn 26 Thursday, advanced to her second final of the season, having lost to world No. 1 Martina Hingis in the Australian Open final, her first Grand Slam appearance since she won Wimbledon in 1994.

Coetzer, who won her first title of the year at Hilton Head, South Carolina, on Sunday, lost for only the sixth time in 22 matches this season.

BONN (AFP) — Bayern Munich crushed 1860 Munich 3-1 in a one-sided derby Saturday and afterward lost their trainer Giovanni Trapattoni who confirmed speculation that he would stand down at the end of the season because of personal reasons.

Trapattoni made the announcement at the post match press conference, first giving his analysis of the game in broken German and then calling on an interpreter so that he could give the reasons for his departure in more precise Italian.

"I think the club mainly needs another trainer who speaks the language well," Trapattoni explained.

Trapattoni emphasized that he had been looked after well by Bayern but could not face another year in a place he could not converse with people properly and which he did not call home.

The final decision came during a long chat with Bayern's management Friday

afternoon. Manager Uli Hoeness blamed the media in part for Trapattoni's standing down, accusing them of making him look foolish because of his bad German.

The highlight was a press conference last month when the normally controlled Italian coach lost his temper at a press conference, verbally pasting several players for their bad form in hardly comprehensible German.

It shook the club into line but also made him the laughing stock of the nation with talk show hosts, comedians and even football commentators poking fun at his school-boy language skills.

"Especially in that legendary interview he noticed how difficult it was for him to get across certain emotions," Hoeness said.

"The way everyone latched on to that, it hurt him to the point where he probably said, okay that's enough," Trapattoni's replacement is already waiting in the wings, ex-Borussia Dortmund coach

Ottmar Hitzfeld. Bayern are now just one point behind leaders Kaiserslautern, who have a game in hand, and gathering speed at precisely the right time.

Bayern Leverkusen buried their last hope of starting in the Champions League next season by losing 1-0 in Wolfsburg, their first defeat in 22 Bundesliga matches.

Suttgart came from behind against Schalke and pulled off a miraculous 3-1 victory through a 91st minute goal by captain Frank Verlaar.

"That was a tough match for our nerves," Stuttgart defender Thomas Berthold laughed. Within 10 minutes Stuttgart were 2-0 down after Marc Wilmots and Michael Goossens struck but Jonathan Akpoborie and Gerhard Poschner balanced out the scoreline by half-time.

Marco Van Hoogdalem pounced just after the break for Schalke's third goal but Akpoborie equalised in the 69th. Stuttgart got their win-

ner in injury time when Schalke keeper Jens Lehmann failed to jump at the ball on a corner kick, allowing the ball to fall perfectly at Verlaar's feet.

"Stuttgart had six shots on goal today and used four of them. We had 10 or 12 and used three. That was the main difference today," disgraced Schalke coach Huuh Stevens summed up.

The loss drops his side to fifth, level with Stuttgart on 45 points in their head to head race for the final UEFA Cup place. A goal by Rolf Guillemin from the Democratic Republic of Congo gave Karlsruhe a valuable 0-1 victory in Cologne.

They exchanged 15th place with 1860 Munich because of it. Hamburg can make plans for another season in Germany's first division after beating Arminia Bielefeld 2-0. And Werder Bremen were too good for Hertha Berlin, winning 0-2.

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												Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kundi and the group	at 8:30 p.m.
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## Bitter sweet victory for sorry Rafter

CHENNAI, India (AFP) — Patrick Rafter overcame defending champion Mikael Tillstrom of Sweden 6-3, 6-4 to claim the third title of his career at the Chennai Open here on Sunday.

The victory earned the top seed \$58,000 while fifth seeded Tillstrom earned \$34,000.

Despite his victory, Rafter admitted that the timing of his success had left a sour taste, coming as it did so soon after he withdrew from Australia's Davis Cup tie with the after-effects of a virus the previous week.

"I feel like it's an insult in a way, that I won a tournament but I couldn't play Davis Cup," he said. "I feel like I let the country down. It looks like I hadn't tried for Davis Cup and didn't want to play so I could save myself to come to Chennai and win. Unfortunately I have that feeling and that's not the way it was. It takes a little bit off the win, actually."

Rafter began well and swept the first eight points, but Tillstrom quickly responded and levelled at 2-2. But a long forehand allowed the Australian to take a 4-2 lead, and Tillstrom failed to take advantage of two break points in the next game.

Tillstrom looked the more skilful player for much of the second set, showing more variety in his game than Rafter with his lobs, passes down the line and a few winning service returns. That allowed him to build a 4-1 lead, but problems with his serve and inconsistency in the rallies allowed Rafter to recover to 4-4. A netted backhand volley then gave Rafter a break for 5-4 and he served out for his first title since winning the U.S. Open in September.

"I served pretty well I thought. I served the big points well, the break points, and made some good half-volleys," said Rafter. "All week, when the pressure was on I responded well. When I came here I didn't know how I was going to feel. I could have been out in the first round."

Tillstrom, who has reached only two finals in his career, both in Chennai, admitted that his serve had been the weak link in his game. He struck six double-faults and struggled to put his first serve into play.

"I had some chances in the first set but he came up with some great volleys," said Tillstrom, "and in the second set, at 4-1 I thought he looked a little bit tired and I got tight thinking I could win the set."

"The key thing was I didn't serve very well. I was never really confident with my serve, and my passing shots were a little bit out. All week they had been going in."

## 1st Division Basketball Championship

### Ahli give Jazireh a hard time before losing first playoff match

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Although they won their match with a 15-point difference, Al Jazireh were unimpressive despite keeping their lead atop the First Division Basketball Championship standings as the playoffs kicked off Sunday evening.

Titleholders Al Jazireh beat Al Ahli 78-63 in the first match of the playoffs in which they will also face Al Orthodoxi in the two-round event concluding May 1.

Al Ahli held on to a 32-32 tie in the first half but later faltered as their opponents managed to seal the match with a precious win.

With Al Ahli now out of contention, Al Jazireh needed to win the match to stay in contention for the title.

Al Jazireh now need to beat Al Orthodoxi in the coming two rounds to keep their title.

Al Jazireh had beat Al Orthodoxi 92-84 and Al Ahli 75-69 in the first round which they ended with an unbeaten streak. However, they could only manage a dismal 57-53 win over Al Ahli and lost their only match to Al Orthodoxi 73-69 in the second round.

Last season's runners up Al Ahli are suffering the ill-effects of inadequate pre-season training which led to an inconsistent form. They

started training late as they were busier tackling technical obstacles like recruiting a coach and luring back veterans to the lineup.

Al Orthodoxi finished third last year but have demonstrated that they were in better shape to resume their dominance of the game.

Al Jazireh ended a 30-year domination among the two rivals last season. Prior to that Al Orthodoxi had an undisputed reign from 1976-1989, but Al Ahli won the title in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 aided by the signing of Naser Bushnaq.

Al Orthodoxi came back to win in 1991, 1995 and 1996.

### PLAYOFF STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	Sr	Sa	Pts
Jazireh	11	10	1	968	645	21
Orthodoxi	10	9	1	837	538	19
Ahli	11	6	5	735	684	17

## Rampant Arsenal close in on United

LONDON (AFP) — Arsenal were installed as the new favourites to win the English Premiership title after crushing Newcastle 3-1 and move within four points of leaders and reigning champions Manchester United on Sunday.

The Gunners, bidding for their first league title since 1991, swept aside Kenny Dalglish's relegation-haunted outfit despite the absence of star players. Dennis Bergkamp, Ian Wright, Martin Keown and Lee Dixon.

Arsene Wenger's side have three games in hand over United, which would give them a five point lead at the top if converted into victories, going into the final four matches of the campaign.

Bookmakers Ladbrokes quote the Double-chasing Gunners as 8-11 favourites with United at evens and Liverpool at 100-1.

With his team not producing the results on the pitch, United manager Alex Ferguson has started to play mind-games with Arsenal in a bid to upset their relentless march towards the top.

After the setback of United's 1-1 home draw with Liverpool on Friday, Ferguson provocatively suggested that Arsenal could only throw the title away — even though the London club were then seven points adrift of United.

But Arsenal have been unfazed by Ferguson's psychological warfare and underlined their confidence with a handsome win over Newcastle, French stars Nicolas Anelka (two) and Patrick Vieira grabbing the goals.

Wenger refuses to rise to Ferguson's taunts, preferring to let his team do the talking. "I'm not concerned by what he (Ferguson) says, just about the next game," said Wenger after Saturday's game — a dress rehearsal for the FA Cup final.

"All I want to do is think positively, and that's how we

have to think. At this stage in the season you cannot allow any negative thoughts. We just have to keep showing the spirit we did today."

But if Wenger is in relaxed mood, the same cannot be said for Newcastle counterpart, Dalglish. The former Liverpool boss is not famous for his co-operation with the media and in his post-match conference on Saturday, he did little to improve his reputation, insulting one reporter by drawing attention to his waistline and giving off-hand responses to other legitimate questions.

"Asked why Newcastle were losing so many games, he snapped back: "Because the other teams are scoring more goals."

Meanwhile, Barnsley halted a three-game losing streak in the Premiership when they beat Sheffield Wednesday 2-1 in a tense Yorkshire derby battle.

And Barnsley manager Danny Wilson believes the pressure will now be on Newcastle when the two teams clash in a crunch relegation battle at St James' Park on Monday.

Defiant Tottenham boss Christian Garside insisted his team will still avoid relegation despite a 2-0 defeat at Chelsea which plunged them to within one point of the bottom three.

Gross rejected suggestions that his team were less than committed to the cause and lucky not to be out of the contest well before Tore Andre Flo and Gianluca Vialli scored Chelsea's goals in the last 15 minutes.

Gross said: "We are still strong enough and so am I for this relegation fight. Our destiny is still in our own hands."

A 2-0 home victory over in-form Leeds boosted Everton's hopes of survival as they moved above fellow fallen giants Tottenham and Newcastle into sixth from bottom — three points clear of the drop zone.

Everton manager Howard Kendall said: "We had some excellent performances out there, especially the players I have brought in from the First Division who were supposed to be bad boys."

Bottom club Crystal Palace look destined for First Division football next season after they lost 3-0 against Leicester at Selhurst Park — their 10th defeat in 11 matches.

On-loan striker Boh Taylor struck a 66th-minute winner as Bolton hit Blackburn's UEFA Cup hopes and boosted their chances of staying in the Premiership for a second season with a 2-1 win.

Wimbledon's Carl Leaburn capitalised on a dreadful blunder by Southampton keeper Paul Jones to lift the London club away from the drop zone in a 1-0 away win.

Seventh-placed West Ham fought out a ten-men battle in the clash for a UEFA Cup place against Derby, who are one place below the Londoners, but a bad-tempered match ended 0-0.

The Hammers had John Hartson sent off for serious foul play in the 33rd minute but Derby's Stefano Eranio was quick to follow him four minutes later when he was dismissed for violent conduct after a tussle with David Unsworth.

Aston Villa's Dwight Yorke netted his 12th and 13th goals of the season in 2-1 win over Midlands and mid-table rivals Coventry.

## Bulls win; Wolves upset Jazz

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago Bulls clinched the best record in the East with their 60th victory, beating the Orlando Magic 87-78 Saturday night behind 37 points — and a left-handed airball from the free-throw line — from Michael Jordan.

The two-time defending champions (60-18) have earned homecourt advantage at least through the first three rounds of the playoffs. The Bulls are also one game ahead of Utah for the best overall record after the Jazz were beaten at Minnesota on Saturday night.

Jordan, who shot 15-of-25 from the floor but only 4-of-10 from the line, airballed a left-handed free throw with the Bulls ahead by 17 late in the third quarter.

Vancouver Grizzlies 105, Portland Trail Blazers 96 (Overtime): In Vancouver, British Columbia, Shaheed Abdur-Rahim matched his season high with 31 points, including four in overtime, as Vancouver snapped a four-game losing streak.

Vancouver's Tony Massenburg, filling in for injured centre Bryant Reeves (bruised right knee), finished with a season-high 22 points before he was ejected for picking up his second technical foul with 2:59 left in overtime.

Blue Edwards scored 27 and shot 9-for-9 from the free throw line over the final 17 minutes. Abdur-Rahim also set a franchise record for most field-goal attempts, finishing 15-for-30.

Isaiah Rider scored 26 while Rasheed Wallace finished with 22 points and a career-high 16 rebounds as the Trail Blazers had a four-game road winning streak snapped.

Cleveland Cavaliers 106, Philadelphia 76ers 95: In Cleveland, Wesley Person shot 7-for-10 from 3-point range and scored 25 points as Cleveland had its highest scoring half of the season — 70 points — to beat Philadelphia.

The Cavaliers, who improved to 20-0 when scoring 100 or more points, came back from an early 20-point deficit and moved within 2 1/2 games of Atlanta for the fifth seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Person scored 17 points in the second half as Cleveland overcame a 51-36 halftime deficit. Three rookies were instrumental in Cleveland's comeback. Brevin Knight had 20 points and 14 assists, Derek Anderson scored 20 points and Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 16 points and 15 rebounds.

Philadelphia's Allen Iverson scored 32 points before fouling out with 57 seconds left.

Minnesota Timberwolves 110, Utah Jazz 103: In Minneapolis, the Timberwolves guaranteed the first winning season in franchise history and dealt the Jazz a blow in their



Chicago Bulls' guard Michael Jordan (L) moves around Orlando Magic guard Mark Price (R) on his way to the basket during the first half of the NBA game in Chicago (Reuters photo)

hopes to win homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs.

Stephon Marbury had 30 points and 10 assists and Kevin Garnett had 22 points for the Wolves, who handed Utah just its third loss in 25 games.

Karl Malone had 37 points and 12 rebounds for Utah in his return from a one-game suspension.

The defeat cut Utah's lead over idle Seattle to one game in the race for the best record in the Western Conference.

Minnesota (42-36) tied a season high with 11 3-pointers on 15 attempts to extend its franchise-best victory total. The Wolves were 40-42 last year, their best showing until this season.

Dallas Mavericks 99, Denver Nuggets 81: In Dallas, Shawn Bradley had 18 points, 14 rebounds and four blocks as Dallas ended a five-game losing streak.

Dallas won three of the four games with Denver this season, giving the Mavericks only their second season series victory of 1997-98. Dallas completed a 4-0 sweep of the Vancouver Grizzlies earlier

this season. Erick Strickland added 16 points and Michael Finley had 15 to help the Mavericks to their 20th victory of the season.

Nets 124, Bucks 117: In Milwaukee, Sam Cassell had 29 points and 13 assists and Kerry Kittles added 25 points as New Jersey won its fourth straight.

Keith Van Horn added 20 points as the Nets moved within a half-game of the idle New York Knicks for the seventh spot in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Cassell, coming off games of 29, 35 and 30 points, has

led New Jersey in scoring throughout its winning streak. The Nets opened a three-game lead over Orlando, which lost, at Chicago on Saturday night.

Lakers 96, Warriors 84: In Oakland, California, Shaquille O'Neal had 35 points and 15 rebounds and Los Angeles held off a second-half charge by Golden State.

The Lakers (57-21) moved one game behind Seattle (58-20) and two behind Utah (59-19) in the race for the Western Conference's top playoff seed.

## PEACE CORPS / JORDAN ARABIC LANGUAGE COORDINATOR

The U.S. Peace Corps in Jordan is seeking suitably qualified candidates for the long-term contractual position of Arabic Language Coordinator.

### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develops Arabic language learning materials and training courses for adult foreigners.
- Assists in the recruitment of Jordanian Arabic language teachers and supervises their teaching of language in a total immersion village based format and through periodic centre-based language training courses.
- Provides lead in structuring, implementing and managing an intensive 12 week introductory Arabic language and cultural training program.
- Creates and applies more advanced materials for supplementary independent language acquisition to cover a two year period.
- Evaluates and assesses language learning progress and final proficiency level attained by learners; monitors and evaluates teaching proficiency demonstrated by language teachers.
- Establishes and fosters ongoing contact with Jordan based language teaching institutions and develops a long-term language materials and teaching programme for Peace Corps Volunteers.

### Required:

- Degree in language education and actual experience or strong interest in curriculum development.
- A minimum of three years of language teaching experience (any language) using communicative methods.
- Total fluency in written and spoken Arabic and English.
- Supervisory teaching experience preferred.
- Willingness to work for extended periods outside Amman (e.g. Irbid, Karak).

This is a mid-level technical staff position of a long-term contractual nature. Interested candidates should submit a curriculum vitae and cover letter no later than April 25, 1998 to:

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#### WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- AKJ3 OAJ874 OK 487
- The bidding has proceeded:
- |     | NORTH | EAST | WEST |
|-----|-------|------|------|
| 1st | Pass  | 10   | Pass |
| 2nd | Pass  | 10   | Pass |
- What do you bid now?
- Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- AK4 OK74 OAJ1085 AKK
- The bidding has proceeded:
- |     | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-----|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1st | Pass  | 10   | Pass  | 10   |
| 2nd | Pass  | 10   | Pass  | 10   |
- What do you bid now?
- Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- AKQJ982 OK32 AKKQ87
- The bidding has proceeded:
- |     | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|-----|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1st | Pass  | 20   | Pass  | 20   |
| 2nd | Pass  | 20   | Pass  | 20   |
- What do you bid now?
- Q. 4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- AK OK82 OAJ107 AJ984
- The bidding has proceeded:
- |     | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
|-----|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1st | Pass  | 10   | Pass  | 10   |
| 2nd | Pass  | 10   | Pass  | 10   |
- What do you bid now?
- Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- AKJ8 OK748 OAJ10 4Q85
- The bidding has proceeded:
- |     | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
|-----|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1st | Pass  | 10   | Pass  | 10   |
| 2nd | Pass  | 10   | Pass  | 10   |
- What action do you take?
- Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- AK OK83 OAJKJ8 4A1082
- The bidding has proceeded:
- |     | EAST | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH |
|-----|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1st | Pass | 10    | Pass | 10    |
| 2nd | Pass | 10    | Pass | 10    |
- What action do you take?

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## Peres says his cabinet never promised Syria a withdrawal

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres denied on Sunday Syrian claims that his government committed itself to return control of the Golan Heights to Damascus as part of a peace treaty.

"Israel never gave a written commitment concerning a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights," Mr. Peres said on Israeli Radio in response to recent Syrian statements.

Syrian Defence Minister Mustapha Tlass said over the weekend that U.S. President Bill Clinton had signed a document confirming the Peres government's willingness to withdraw from the Golan Heights in exchange for security guarantees and a full peace.

Mr. Tlass said the document was in the possession of Syrian President Hafez Assad who would make it public in the future.

But Mr. Peres said "I doubt very much if President Clinton would have put his name" to such

a letter. "The Syrians are not being logical because if they claim we promised to withdraw from the Golan Heights in exchange for peace, why didn't they say so at the time and why did they refuse such a deal," he said.

Negotiations between Syria and Peres' government broke off in February 1996 and have not been resumed by the right-wing coalition headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Mr. Peres acknowledged that the policy of the Labour governments which negotiated with Syria from 1992 to 1996 was to agree a pull-back from the Golan Heights according to the principle "the depth of the withdrawal will depend on the depth of peace" Damascus was willing to accept.

Israeli conditions for the pullback included a series of military steps by Syria designed to provide guarantees that the Golan Heights

could not be used to launch surprise attacks on Israel.

The Labour government also insisted Damascus agree to establish full diplomatic and economic relations with Israel, conditions Mr. Assad apparently was not willing to accept.

Israel occupied the Golan Heights in 1967 and illegally annexed the territory in 1981.

Syria has demanded that the negotiations be resumed with Israel on the basis of the Labour government's agreement in principle to withdraw from the Golan Heights.

Mr. Netanyahu has rejected this formula but says his government is willing to discuss any scenario with the Syrians.

The chief Israeli negotiator during the 1996 talks, Itamar Rabinovich, said in an interview published Sunday that "the notion of a withdrawal from the Golan was raised but there was never any commitment on our part."

## Northern Ireland accord boosts morale of Israeli peace camp

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli peace activists hailed Sunday the historic compromise agreement on Northern Ireland as an inspiration for efforts to save the beleaguered Middle East peace process.

"The Northern Ireland agreement is great news for all those who fight for peace in the world and especially in the Middle East," said Hagit Yaari, spokeswoman for the leftist Peace Now movement.

"We are especially happy that the British government has put an end to a situation of colonialism which has lasted for several centuries," said Yaari, whose movement spearheads opposition to Jewish settlement of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Shlomo Ben Ami, a leader of the opposition Labour Party, also drew a parallel between the nationalist and religious struggle over British-ruled Northern Ireland and the Israeli-Arab conflict.

"The real lesson to be learned from this agreement is that no conflict is unsolvable," Mr. Ben Ami said.

Yossi Sarid, leader of the leftist Meretz Party, stressed the strong movement in the Northern Ireland negotiations of the United States, which is pressing the right-wing Israeli government for concessions in the deadlocked talks with the Palestinians.

"This proves that the role of the United States in making peace is indispensable," Mr. Sarid said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been trying to fend off any move by the United States to put public pressure on his government to break the deadlock in the peace talks, insisting that only the parties directly involved can take the necessary decisions.

He echoed this in his brief reaction to the Belfast agreement, saying, "We welcome any deal to which all the parties agree."

Other right-wing politicians were also prudent, emphasising the differences between the situation in Northern Ireland and that with the Palestinians.

"Israel is not in the same situation as Britain, whose existence was never in danger and who only had to deal with the Irish, while the Palestinians have the whole Arab World behind them," said former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Mr. Shamir did however describe Friday's accord between Irish nationalists and the Protestants who want Northern Ireland to remain under British rule as "encouraging" and noted that early Jewish resistance groups battling British rule over Palestine drew inspiration from the Irish cause.

Mr. Shamir, one of the leaders of the underground Stern gang which carried out

attacks on British forces before Israel's creation in 1948, used the *nom de guerre* Michael, after Irish Republican leader Michael Collins.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat for his part expressed hope that British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who personally helped broker the Belfast accord, could do the same for the Middle East when he visits the region later this month.

"We have great hope we will equally succeed in establishing the peace with Israel," he said.

David Bar-Ilan, a spokesman for Mr. Netanyahu, said Mr. Blair's influence could be particularly useful in helping finalise agreements on opening a Palestinian airport and joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial zone in the Gaza Strip — confidence building measures which have been stalled for months.

"If he can contribute to the interim issues like the airport and the industrial park it would be a very important step forward for the peace process," Mr. Bar-Ilan told AFP.

Israeli officials stressed however that the United States remains the central mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace effort and that Europe's role should focus on helping implement specific economic and technical agreements between the two sides.

## Syria is the key to any Lebanon deal — Israeli army chief

AAJSHA (AFP) — Israel's army chief, General Amnon Shahak, declared Sunday that Israel could not safely withdraw from the buffer zone in south Lebanon without Syria's approval.

"The key is in Syria's hands, not in Lebanon," General Shahak told journalists during a visit to Ajlun, a base of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army.

"Someday neither Israel nor Syria will be in Lebanon, but that day is still far off," said General Shahak.

The general's statement contrasted with the latest

offer from the Israeli government to withdraw its troops from Lebanon — as called for under U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 — on condition Beirut guarantee the security of Israel's northern border.

The proposal dropped earlier Israeli conditions which linked a troop pull-out to peace agreements with both Lebanon and Syria and to a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, where Damascus maintains some 30,000 troops.

Lebanon and Syria rejected the Israeli offer, insisting that Resolution 425, adopted in 1978, requires

an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal.

Both governments insist the Lebanon crisis can only be resolved through a global peace agreement which would also include Israel returning the Golan Heights to Syria, a condition rejected by the current Israeli government.

Israel asserts that Syria promotes guerrilla attacks on Israel's buffer zone in south Lebanon and on northern Israel to pressure the Jewish state to return the Golan Heights.

Israel occupied the strategic plateau in 1967 and illegally annexed it in 1981.

## Richardson invites Bahraini emir to visit U.S.

MANAMA (AFP) — U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson met the emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa Sunday and gave him an invitation to visit the United States, the GNA news agency reported.

Mr. Richardson, here for two days before starting an Asian tour, held talks with the emir and Bahraini Prime

Minister Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa on the regional situation, particularly the February accord between Iraq and the United Nations on weapons inspections, GNA said.

The invitation from U.S. President Bill Clinton invited the emir to visit in June, it said.

The United States deploys a large military force in

Bahrain as part of a massive build-up in the Gulf since November when the Iraq weapons crisis first erupted.

Mr. Richardson is due to visit Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand during his 10-day Asian tour largely aimed at laying the groundwork for a visit by Mr. Clinton in the autumn.



OFFERING PRAISE FROM AMONG THE RUINS: A choral of Jordanian girls perform during an early morning Easter Sunday service, among the ruins of the ancient Roman city of Jerash. Jordan officially celebrates Easter in accordance with the Orthodox calendar starting next week (AFP photo)

## Sinn Fein leadership to take 'positive' line on peace agreement at rallies

DUBLIN (AFP) — Leaders of the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, will sound out grass roots members over the new peace deal during commemorations here Sunday of the 1916 Easter Rising, the party's Irish MP Caoimhghin O'Caolain said.

The biggest test for the leadership's peace strategy comes next Saturday when the two-day Ad Fheis — Sinn Fein annual conference — begins in Dublin.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams must convince his supporters to approve the peace settlement signed on Friday in Belfast. "We have always adopted a positive approach to the peace process," Mr. O'Caolain said.

"Our peace strategy is firmly rooted as part of our party's approach to its overall responsibilities and to moving the situation forward to our core objectives," he said.

The 30-strong party executive will be meeting this week ahead of the conference to go over Friday's agreement.

"Unquestionably the business of the last week will be top of the agenda," Mr. O'Caolain said.

"Since last Friday, republicans have been in constant contact and that will continue on an ongoing basis either in a casual or more organised way. People are obviously paying great attention to the detail of what is there." The view of IRA prisoners in jails in Northern Ireland, Britain and the Irish Republic will also be sought prior to Saturday's conference.

On Sunday morning, Sinn Fein chief negotiator Martin McGuinness urged his party to give the settlement plan a fair hearing.

"It is not a straightforward black and white situation at this stage. I think people are

in the process of making up their minds," Mr. McGuinness told GMTV.

"I think they have looked at the document and they have seen areas which will be of concern to them and they have seen also areas which they believe hold out great potential."

"I think what we have to do is come to all of this in a balanced way."

Gerry Adams was to address a 1916 commemorative gathering in Carrickmore, County Tyrone, while other rallies were being addressed by Mr. O'Caolain in Dublin, Mr. McGuinness in Derry and Martin Ferris in Belfast.

Easter is one of the most important dates "in the Republican calendar."

Commemorations for those who died in the 1916 rising against the British colonial administration are held all over the country and major policy statements are made to the rallies.

Meanwhile, an editorial in the Irish Sunday Business Post said the Northern Ireland peace deal was an "enormous disappointment" and likely to ensure partition of the island for many years to come.

The strongly critical editorial, which contrasted sharply with the positive tone of other Irish newspapers, said the settlement would oblige the vast majority of Republicans to "accept the legitimacy of the six county statelet," of Northern Ireland.

It was particularly critical of the proposal to amend the 1937 Irish constitution and drop the republic's territorial claim to the North. "We will become the laughing stock of Europe: The first country ever to vote part of its national territory out of existence and the first country unable to define its national territory," it said.

## Iran begins nine-day naval manoeuvres in Gulf

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's navy launched manoeuvres in the Gulf and Sea of Oman on Sunday, a senior navy commander told the official IRNA news agency.

The manoeuvres, baptised "Enehad" (Unity), were designed to "increase the combat readiness of the naval forces in safeguarding the country's sea borders and testing military equipment," said Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari.

Adm. Sayyari said three Russian-built submarines — the Tareq, Nouth and Younes — were taking part in the nine-day manoeuvres along with two destroyers — the Sahaban and the Alborz — and two light vessels — the Lavan and the Hengam.

Other warships are also taking part along with helicopters, reconnaissance aircraft and three F-4 jet fighters, he said.

Operations include refuelling at sea at night, controlling and guiding flight units, defending against enemy air attacks and electronic warfare, he told IRNA.

Iran's navy commander, Vice Admiral Abbas Mohtaj, said Saturday that the exercises would involve 15,000 men.

Iran took delivery of its third submarine from Russia in February 1997, and insists that the three do not constitute a threat to regional security.

Western military experts believe the Kilo-class submarines give Iran the ability to mine navigation routes and torpedo vessels in a region that handles around one-fifth of the world's oil supplies.

## Egypt gives Turkish captain, shipowner 15 years jail for piracy

CAIRO (AFP) — The owner of a Turkish cargo vessel and its captain were sentenced in absentia on Sunday to 15 years jail with hard labour for piracy and abducting eight Egyptians last year.

The trial of Naci Usakli, captain of the "Obo Engin" and shipowner Helmi Adelaar, lasted only five minutes before Egypt's High State Security Court Judge Mahmud Refki

handed down his sentence. "It was an act of piracy with precedent in Egypt since the opening of the Suez Canal" in 1869, said the prosecutor's office, which had called for the maximum 15 year sentence against the two accused.

No lawyers were present to represent the defendants.

In October, Usakli refused to pay \$375,000 in tariff arrears to the Suez Canal Authority when

eight Egyptian civil servants boarded his boat demanding that he pay his dues.

Usakli fled Egyptian territorial waters with the eight on board as hostages and sailed back to Turkey, where the Egyptian nationals were finally released.

Several of the hostages were in the Cairo court and expressed satisfaction with the verdict.

## Iraqi Kurdish commanders defect to rival pro-Ankara group

ANKARA (AFP) — Several rebel fighters of the Iraqi Kurdistan Patriotic Union (PUK) have joined their rival pro-Ankara Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), Anadolu news agency reported Sunday.

Quoting a KDP Radio broadcast in northern Iraq, the report said 18 peshmegas, including eight commanders, defected from the PUK headed by Jalal Talabani and joined the KDP.

Over 20 PUK fighters have

broken ranks over the past 10 days, the radio said.

The two rival groups have clashed since 1993, at the cost of around 3,000 lives, after having shared control of northern Iraq for two years in the aftermath of Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf war.

They have observed a fragile ceasefire since 1994, and on March 22 they exchanged prisoners, in a gesture to mark the Kurdish New Year of Newroz.

The KDP, headed by Massud Barzani, has cooperated with the Turkish government against the PKK since May. More than 29,000 people have been killed in PKK-related violence in the southeast since 1984 when the rebels launched their armed campaign for a Kurdish homeland.

Ankara claims the PKK's strength had diminished considerably after four years of intensive military operations in both southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq.

Hayat the pilgrims had failed to heed crowd control warnings and were overcome with "religious enthusiasm."

The Turkish official criticised what he called a lack of coordination among Saudi authorities in their organisation of the event.

However, Mahmoud Ben Mohammad Safar, the Saudi minister for pilgrimage affairs, denied Sunday that the design and capacity of the overpass and the organisation of the pilgrims' movements were direct causes of the accident.

Mr. Safar told the London-based Arabic newspaper Al

## Father of Madonna's child is a big part of her life

NEW YORK (AP) — Madonna wants the world to know the father of her child may not be her husband, but he's still a big part of her life. "I was in love with him," Madonna says in TV Guide. "A lot of people think I walked out on the street and looked at him and said, 'You're going to be my sperm donor.'" Madonna had a daughter, Lourdes, with Carlos Leon, a personal trainer she met in New York. "I had a relationship with him. I still have a relationship with him," Madonna said. "We are really good friends... The last thing I want my daughter to do is grow up without a father."

## Williams: From psychologist to misfit medical student

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Robin Williams goes from his Oscar-winning performance as a psychologist in "Good Will Hunting" to a role as a misfit medical student in "Patch Adams." Williams stars as Hunter "Patch" Adams, whose perfect bedside manner turns the medical establishment upside down, but helps his patients heal. Williams' wife, Marsha, is a co-producer on the Universal Pictures film being shot in Asheville, N.C., and San Francisco, where the couple lives. The movie is set to be released in December.

## Monica Lewinsky's mother marries

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The mother of Monica Lewinsky, a former White House intern at the center of the Clinton sex and perjury scandal, has married a friend of President Bill Clinton's advisor Vernon Jordan, CNN reported. Marcia Lewis married Peter Strauss last weekend at an undisclosed location, CNN reported. They had been dating for about a year, CNN said.

## Immortality is starring in animated classic — Lansbury

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Angela Lansbury created movie history as the animated teapot in "Beauty and the Beast," so naturally she jumped at the chance of a similar role in 20th Century Fox's recent "Anastasia." "It's a legacy, even though I'm playing two very different characters, it's a dream and a legacy I leave behind," she says. "In 'Anastasia' I play the old dowager empress and in the other I play a lovely piping teapot, but it is something that my grandchildren love and remember."

Immortality, says the star of the long-running "Murder She Wrote" series on television, is being a voice in an animated classic. "There is something I can leave behind to my children and grandchildren."

## Academy Awards to return to Hollywood

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Beginning in 2001, the Academy Awards will leave Los Angeles and return to Hollywood where the movie industry's premier event was born, the academy announced. Designers say a new venue, part of a \$350 million development at the corner of Hollywood and Highland boulevards, will make the Academy Awards grander and more elegant.

The move by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will put the event back where it started for the first time since 1960, when the ceremony was held at Hollywood's Pantages Theatre.

World  
Iraq holds another mass funeral  
PALESTINE  
HEAT WAVE  
area in Beirut  
more than a